INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 9520522

Names in Toni Morrison's novels: Connections

Clayton, Jane Burris, Ph.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1994

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

NAMES IN TONI MORRISON'S NOVELS: CONNECTIONS

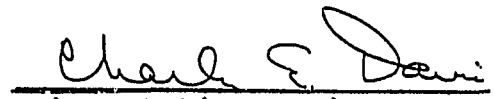
by

Jane Burris Clayton

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro
1994

Approved by



Dissertation Advisor

CLAYTON, JANE BURRIS, Ph.D. Names in Toni Morrison's Novels: Connections. (1994) Directed by Dr. Charles Davis. pp. 346

This study examines Toni Morrison's naming within her six novels and demonstrates that although the names function on many levels, overall, they tend to connect her characters to their community and to their heritage. Names are an integral part of Morrison's fictive world. Few animals, businesses, organizations, places or characters, no matter how insignificant, pass through that world unnamed, and if they do, that lack of a name is notable. Morrison's names do not merely identify but often function as self-contained character sketches, alerting us to characters' possible actions, characteristics, or even fates. Names often serve as connections to her themes, especially those involving personal and cultural identities.

Morrison uses names to firmly ground the inhabitants of her African-American cosmology within a specific time and place. Within this cosmology, names also serve as connections between characters and their communities. Although these connections may not always be positive ones, they are necessary for the characters' survival, often creating symbiotic relationships. After all, no Morrison character physically separates him/herself from the

community; indeed, the community is necessary for the character's survival and names often attest to this.

Inherent in Morrison's naming patterns is a mistrust of the heritage of slave names derived from the white culture's use of the Bible and classical mythology. Such names often contain irony or an inadequate allusion. By subverting two important myth systems within the white culture, she subverts its power.

To counteract the inadequacies of the white culture's naming, the names of some of Morrison's strongest characters are derived directly or indirectly from Africa. Through names she connects characters not only to their past and/or their present, but also when she names from Africa, she often promises her characters (Sethe, Son, Solomon -- aka as Milkman) a future.

This study includes an alphabetized listing, by novels, of the characters in Morrison's fiction, with pertinent information given for each.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Advisor _____

Committee Members _____

_____

_____

November 2, 1994
Date of Acceptance by Committee

November 2, 1994
Date of Final Oral Examination

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For all their sacrifices, their love and their understanding, I thank Doug and Lisa; I could never have started or finished without them.

For their unfailing faith in me, I thank the other members of my family--my parents, my in-laws, my sister and brother-in-law.

For the day to day support that I needed for so long, I thank the lunch bunch; for their encouragement, I thank my colleagues in Jane Freeman and at Pfeiffer.

For his wisdom, patience, guidance and perserverance, I thank Dr. Charles Davis.

For their fairness, support, and encouragement, I thank Dr. Randolph Bulgin, Dr. Kelly Griffith, Dr. Donald Darnell; for filling in on the committee, I thank Dr. James Ellis.

For the financial assistance that made so much of my work possible, I thank Pfeiffer College; and I especially thank the deans and department heads there that helped me balance the roles of teacher and student without compromising either.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

To enter the fictive world of Toni Morrison is to meet a fascinating array of characters--Pecola, an African-American youngster who prays for blue eyes; Eva Peace, who lay in front of a train, allowing a leg to be cut off in order to claim insurance money for her children; Sethe, a runaway who kills her daughter rather than have her returned to slavery; Violet, who attempts to cut the face of the corpse of her husband's lover. Morrison skillfully reveals her characters to the reader through the literary devices of inner dialogues, description, and action, but one of her most effective techniques for developing character and theme in her novels is the naming of her characters and locations.

In her fiction, Morrison names deliberately and extensively with attention to nuances, allusions, and irony. She will rarely refer to "a baker," "a neighbor," "a friend," but instead will name the most minor character because Morrison, like Pilate, the wise woman from Song of Solomon, "knows the sanctity and magic of names is not to be disregarded" (Fabre 109). To disregard a name creates serious consequences. In the African culture:

> the name is the expression of the soul; because of this, the choosing and the keeping of the name is a major ritual. To lose the name or, in Afro-American

> terms, to be 'called out of one's name' is an offense against the spirit. (Byerman 113)

When Sula, who has discarded many men but thinks she has found her soulmate in Ajax (Sula), discovers that her lover's name was A. Jacks instead of Ajax, she realizes, "'And if I didn't know his name, then there is nothing I did know . . .'" (136). The name contains the knowledge of the person, the essence, the identity. Milkman, who sheds his birth name when he discovers his African heritage (Song of Solomon), comes to the realization that "When you know your name, you should hang on to it, for unless it is noted down and remembered, it will die when you do" (333). Morrison illustrates this through Pilate, whose name will not die because it is written down in her earring and then carried away by a bird at her death.

By strength of their numbers alone, the names (people, places, historical figures, animals) in her novels demonstrate Morrison's philosophy that names must be "noted down and remembered." However, a majority of these names are so carefully chosen and woven into the fabric of the story that to modify them arbitrarily is to alter the entire piece--characterization, setting, theme, even plot. What names could effectively substitute for Macon Dead, Jr., who was spiritually and emotionally dead, living for money alone; for Pilate, who functioned as Milkman's pilot (Song); for Valerian, the man whose life paralleled that of the

emperor for whom he was named; for Son, a possible son of Africa or of Christianity (Tar Baby); for Sweet Home, a farm worked by slave labor (Beloved); for the Bottom, a "nigger joke" (Sula)? Changes in many of the names would create a misreading of Morrison's work similar to the misreadings prompted by editorial changes to Emily Dickinson's poetry. As she deliberately created such important names, names that are "noted down and remembered," Morrison drew from a variety of sources--the Bible, mythology, folklore, western history and African folktales. To know this is to know *how* she names but not *why* she names from these sources. The premise of this study of the names in Toni Morrison's six novels is that she names, primarily, to demonstrate a presence or lack of a presence of her characters' connections to their present day communities and/or to their past through their heritages.

Morrison's concern for where her characters live and where they have come from is reflected in the names of their communities. From the first line of her second novel, Sula, Morrison establishes the idea that the white culture will use naming to oppress, to invert; "in that place, where they tore the night shade and blackberry patches from their roots to make room for the Medallion City Golf Course, there was once a neighborhood;" ". . . when black people lived there it was called the Bottom" (3). The African Americans who live in the Bottom consider the name a "nigger joke" since a

freed slave was tricked into choosing the rocky land at the top of the hill instead of the rich valley when his owner assured him that the hill land was fertile, that it was heaven's bottom. When the New River Road is planned, the Bottomites view this as an opportunity to earn a living, to begin the climb from poverty. However, the new life never materializes since many of them stand in the hiring line but are rejected for job after job because of their race. The river, an archetypal life force, never goes anywhere for them. Near the end of the novel, many of the community die when they attack the New River Road tunnel on National Suicide Day and it collapses. Again, the promise of a better life is unfulfilled, and the New River Road, a name suggesting change, has become another white man's joke:

> . . . the city had always meant to name it something else, something wonderful, but ten years later when the bridge idea was dropped for a tunnel it was still called the New River Road. (Sula 81)

When the candy tycoon Valerian Street (Tar Baby) buys the Isle des Chevaliers, he hears the legend that the island is named for the French Chevaliers, noble horsemen who conquered the island. However, Yardman, Valerian's island workman, believes that the horsemen are slaves who were blinded by the beauty of the island and were washed up with the horses after a shipwreck. The interpretation of the name of the island depends upon which community one belongs

to, that of the rich white owners or the descendants of the slaves. In Jazz Morrison refers to Harlem as the City. Though she names street after street so there is no mistaking where the action is located, she still uses "the City." Through such naming, Harlem almost becomes an anonymous, seductive place to all the newcomers, functioning as a siren to make them forget their backgrounds, their hometowns. In such a place the Vesper County couple, Joe and Violet, temporarily lose a sense of themselves. The solemnity of the name Vesper County contrasts sharply with the City and all it connotes. In the same way, New York City is contrasted to Eloe, Florida in Tar Baby. In the city, the sophisticated Jade, a cultural orphan, feels alive; however, Son, a fugitive for eight years because of an accidental murder, has his roots in Eloe (possibly derived from "Elohim, God") where his father is called Old Man. In this hometown community, the Son feels connected to everyone; Eloe is Son's paradise, as the name suggests. Such contrasting names not only reflect the African American/white power struggle but also establish a pattern of movement from small, religious communities in the South which have nurtured the characters to the large urban areas of the North where the characters often have to rely on the memories of home to feel grounded.

Within these cities and towns, Morrison uses place names to create a sense of belonging within the African-

American community. In the Bottom (Sula), before the advent of fast food franchises and namebrand outlets, the community members gathered at Edna Finch's Mellow House, Irene's Palace of Cosmetology, Porter's Landing and Reba's Grill. When Edna, Irene, Porter, and Reba put their names on their businesses, they demonstrated their pride in their work and opened their businesses to their community in the same spirit that they might open their homes to their friends. If the Bottomite children wanted ice cream, they probably told their mothers, "Goin' to Edna's." A female, late for lunch at Reba's, would only have to slide in a booth and say, "Busy today at Irene's" for her friends to understand her tardiness. Everyone in the Bottom knew Edna, Reba and Irene; in fact, the personal name and business name were all but synonymous. Such ease in the community created an atmosphere where

> old men and young ones draped themselves in front of the Elmira Theater, Irene's Palace of Cosmetology, the pool hall, the grill and the other sagging business enterprises that lined the street. On sills, on stoops, on crates and broken chairs they sat tasting their teeth and waiting for something to distract them. Every passerby, every motor car, every alteration in stance caught their attention and was commented on. Particularly they watched women (Sula 49).

The name of Irene's Palace of Cosmetology also reflects some of the dreams within that community. Mary's Place and Sonny's Shop (Song of Solomon), Sawyer's Restaurant (Beloved), and Dick's Coal Company (The Bluest Eye) also

establish the presence in these communities of businesses owned by African Americans.

However, not all place names have positive connotations. In The Bluest Eye Pauline Breedlove, an African-American woman who uses the movies to escape the realities of her life, visits the Dreamland Theater to watch Hedy Lamarr, then emulates the white movie star's hairstyle. The theme of the novel deals with how various characters attempt to change themselves to fit the white culture's concept of beauty. By naming the theater Dreamland, Morrison makes it clear that Pauline's desire will never be anything more than a dream. Morrison also emphasizes the cruelty of the institution of slavery when she labels Mr. Garner's farm, worked by slaves, Sweet Home (Beloved). Regardless of how well Mr. Garner treats or perceives that he treats his slaves, he owns human beings. A name will not make that less true.

The communities in Morrison's worlds are not passive but tend to be places where everyone knows everyone else and few actions escape public notice. For this reason, the community watches, judges, and names. In Sula Betty is called Teapot's Mama "because being his mama was her biggest failure" (113-14); the name is the community's judgment. Likewise, in Jazz, Violet is renamed Violent by the neighbors after she tries to cut the face of a corpse. Even though she will attempt to escape from slavery with

them, none of the slaves at Sweet Home know Sixo's lover's name because they name her Thirty-Mile-Woman after the distance Sixo travels at great risk to see her (Beloved). In these names, the community renames as a response to one particular event or action; therefore, the names tend to be somewhat one dimensional labels. However, in Beloved, the community no longer calls Henry Lestroy by his given name but instead refers to him as Hunters Hunter because of his prowess in the woods. The new sobriquet is not the result of a single action but is, instead, a term of respect which elevates and honors the man. Milkman, in Song of Solomon, receives his nickname from Freddie, the nosey janitor. When he sees the young boy, "his legs dangling almost to the floor" (13), still nursing, Freddie calls him a milkman, then broadcasts what he has seen and the nickname to the other Southside residents. Milkman's birth name is Macon Dead III, following the practice of naming the first son after the father. As his surname implies, he is emotionally dead. Even though the name Milkman is bestowed on the boy because of a single action, the nickname becomes a transition name that moves him to the true name, Solomon--his great-grandfather's name, which he reclaims after discovering his heritage. With Milkman's renaming, the community has functioned as prophet.

In these names the community, large or small, deems certain actions favorable or not and renames accordingly. In

the same fashion, they rename what the white culture has named for them. In an attempt to squelch the Southside residents from changing Main Avenue to Doctor Street, the town's bureaucracy issues the mandate that Main Street is not Doctor Street, thereby inadvertently renaming the street Not Doctor Street, the name the community adopts. Because only whites are admitted to Mercy Hospital, the African-American community calls it No Mercy Hospital. In these two instances, naming has created a sense of justice from unjust white actions.

Within the communities there are names that include and exclude. In Beloved, Sethe's family is ostracized from the community after Sethe is released from prison, after the spirit of Sethe's murdered baby haunts Baby Suggs' home, and after the neighbors turn against the family following the picnic. When Paul D, one of the slaves from Sweet Home, arrives in Cincinnati, he takes the only family that remains, Denver and Sethe, to see the traveling carnival. There they encounter Abu Snake Charmer, the Arabian Nights Dancer, Giant, Midget, One Ton Lady, Two-Headed Man and the Wild African Savage. These sideshow performers' names, based on their acts or their physical appearance, create a sense of the exotic, of the unknown; such creatures are excluded from most communities and viewed as freaks. The carnival performers' lack of place in this community is clearly established by their names. This permanent

exclusion from the community provides a contrast to the temporary exclusion of Sethe and Denver who eventually rejoin the community after the neighborhood women rally to Sethe and Denver's defense when it is obvious that Beloved plans to destroy the two. The sideshow names also create a sense of the bizarre, leading directly into the next chapter where Beloved emerges from the water, the reborn spirit of Sethe's murdered child.

Other outsiders, however, can claim a more acceptable position within the community. In The Bluest Eye, because there are several characters with foreign names, one would expect them to be treated as the carnival performers were. However, these recent immigrants or the descendants of European immigrants, by virtue of their being white, consider themselves and are considered by others to be superior to the local African Americans. Mr. Yacobowski hardly acknowledges Pecola's presence as he reluctantly sells her the Mary Janes she so loves. Rosemary Villanucci, a neighbor's child, is the nemesis of the MacTeer sisters, and Geraldine much prefers that her son Louis play with Ralph Nisensky than with the other African-American boys from school. The use of the European names Yacobowski, Villanucci, and Nisensky creates a sense of exclusion to the degree that characters who are non-native born Americans but white are preferable to characters who are native born Americans but black. Morrison's segragation by naming

subtly undergirds the novel's depiction of the erosion of the African-American sense of self in characters who attempt to embrace the standards of the white culture, thereby separating themselves from their own cultural heritage. It is ironic that the white culture gains its dominance only by virtue of its color and its sense of superiority over another color. Inhabitants of any small community will consciously or even unconsciously associate skin color with community members' names as a means of exclusion and inclusion, therefore creating racial barriers in a name.

Nicknames can also create a sense of exclusion or inclusion within a community. A nickname is usually given affectionately by family or friends, and in Morrison it tends to reflect personal habits and/or appearance, experiences, idiosyncracies, even resignation. When Milkman reflects on his friends' nicknames (Song of Solomon), he considers them names attained "from yearnings, gestures, flaws, events, mistakes, weaknesses" (333). There is Empire State who stood and swayed, plus Ice Man, Dough Belly, Cool Breeze, Smoky Babe, Pink, T-Bone, Juke Boy and Fuck-up. In Tar Baby all the nicknames belong to Son's friends in his hometown of Eloe, an all African-American town with a sense of belonging, of community. When Son returns to Eloe, he encounters or hears talk of Porky, Popeye, Rascal, Soldier, Stay High, Teen, and Three Yards Boys--not always complimentary names but nicknames forged and used among

friends. By contrast, there are no nicknames in Jade's New York or Valerian's Isle des Chevaliers, thus indicating the lack of a cohesive community.

However, not all nicknames are inclusive and affectionate. From her childhood Pauline Breedlove (The Bluest Eye) desired a nickname which she believed would confer acceptance and affection. However, she receives one only after she is an adult: the white family that she works for calls her Polly. As innocent as such a name might seem, because the Fishers are the only ones who use it, the nickname serves as a symbol of the white world that Pauline considers superior. It becomes another means of separation from her family and her African Americanness. That Beloved lacks nicknames is not so much a matter of exclusion and inclusion as it is a reflection of a way of life that often prohibited the easy camaraderie usually associated with conferring nicknames. The two novels with the most extensive use of nicknames, Song of Solomon and Tar Baby, are set primarily in the twentieth century. However, major portions of Beloved are memories of antebellum Sweet Home, the Garners' Kentucky farm. Nicknames certainly existed among slaves although "ordinarily they were too informal to be entered in official records . . ." (Puckett 43). However, the seriousness of life as a slave on Sweet Home and of free life in Cincinnati, to which many slaves escaped, is mirrored in the lack of nicknames. At Sweet

Home, the slaves arrived with the names given to them by their owners or parents--Sixo, Paul D, Halle, Sethe; none of these is a nickname. Even though the Garners thought their slaves led comfortable lives, the lack of nicknames indicates that life at Sweet Home was not conducive to the renaming which nicknames involve. This was especially true after the schoolteacher's arrival and cruel treatment of the slaves prompted them all to attempt an escape. In Cincinnati, Baby Suggs is an accepted member of her community and though her neighbors add "holy" to her name, it is more a title, a benediction, than a nickname.

There are other names that even though they do not entirely exclude are at least reductive. No one, not even his family, has a good word for Cholly Breedlove (The Bluest Eye), a man who burns down his home, abuses his family, and rapes his pre-teen daughter. The community's contempt is mirrored in Cholly, a name which is a reduction of his given name Charles and a further reduction from the more familiar Charlie. Helene Sabat Wright's given name is reduced to Helen by the Bottomites since they "refused to say Helene. They called her Helen Wright and left it at that" (Sula 18). In this reduction from the melodious French name, the community cuts through her pretentiousness; Helene is always attempting to better herself, to separate herself from her prostitute mother Rochelle and even from her race. In these two examples, the community is perceptive, insightful.

However, the five adults who make up the small community within L'Arbe de la Croix, Valerian Street's island home (Tar Baby), feel superior to the island blacks and are blinded by their sense of superiority. By referring to Gideon as Yardman they reduce him to a label; by referring to Therese as Mary, they reduce her to an island stereotype since they address all the female island helpers as "Mary" because so many have that name. In turn, the reductive names the five bestow merely reflect the shallowness of their own lives: Valerian attempted to create an island retreat which ironically mirrored his retreat from reality in not realizing his wife, Margaret, had physically abused their son; the beautiful Margaret's frustrations turned to abuse because she married too young into a social class in which she was ill equipped to function--her life was a fragmented one; Undine and Sidney, the African- American cook and butler, felt innately superior to the island blacks; and their lovely, Sorbonne-educated niece Jadine also preferred the white dominated worlds of modeling and art.

Morrison creates communities within communities through organizations. In Song of Solomon each of the seven members of the Seven Days represents a specific day of the week, a day on which to exact revenge on whites who went unpunished for African American deaths. The name of the organization suggests the daily need for such justice, justice that its

community needed to enact on the larger white culture. When Sethe (Beloved) was jailed for her child's murder, the Colored Ladies of Delaware,Ohio intervened in her behalf. This organization's name provides a signal to its own community and to the larger white one that these women can unite for a purpose and that they are ladies, a respectful term.

It is in Jazz, however, that Morrison creates the largest number of organizations--Circle A Society, City Belles, Civic Daughters, Colored Boy Scouts, Gay Northeasters, National Negro Business League, and the Salem Women's Club. These organizations reflect the growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of fraternal orders and benefit associations which were "manifestation[s] of the Negro's struggles to become socially self-sufficient" (Franklin and Moss 259). In the novel's 1926 setting, the women's clubs were probably modeled from the National Association of Colored Women, established in 1895, whose motto was "'Lifting As We Climb'" (Franklin and Moss 260). The names of these organizations clearly indicate their members' pride in who they were and what they could do. The names also clearly align the organizations with their communities and with their people.

However, names do not always so clearly reflect or define the nature of what is named. When the first Macon Dead acquired his farm in Pennsylvania, he called it

Lincoln's Heaven, reflecting his hopes for life in the post-Civil War South. It must have seemed a heaven for his neighbors also because years later they tell his grandson Milkman that it was "a farm that colored their lives like a paintbrush and spoke to them like a sermon" (Song 237). But these members of the community will live to realize that the farm was misnamed. Instead of fulfilling the promise of its name to them and to Macon Dead, the farm becomes the catalyst for Dead's murder when the white Butlers want the land. Macon Dead's shooting and the consequent loss of Lincoln's Heaven had their effects. His death "was the beginning of their [community's men] own dying even though they were young boys at the time" (237). Ironically, the heaven the Butlers thought they were getting turned into hell for them when their mansion fell into ruins and the last of the line was a barren woman who committed suicide. Macon Dead, his family, neighbors and even his enemies learned that misnaming has the power to establish false expectations and dreams.

Morrison's fictional names reverberate throughout her novels, often adding layers of meaning to the characterizations and to the themes. She has placed these characters firmly within specific communities or neighborhoods, communities that range in size and geographical location from the five people who live in L'Arbre de la Croix on a Caribbean island to the many who

walk the streets of the Bottom. However, she also populates her fictive worlds with references to actual places and people. In doing so Morrison creates a world community for her characters, a community that does not always co-exist peacefully with her created ones. In The Bluest Eye Pauline Breedlove for a short while is an avid movie fan who eagerly enters the fantasy world on the screen. However, Morrison does not merely note that Pauline envied the movie's star. Instead, she uses the names of film stars of the period to give a clear sense of the world from which Pauline, despite her fantasies, is excluded. Pauline longs to become a part of the white celluloid world that is populated by Claudett Colbert, Clark Gable, Greta Garbo, Betty Grable, Jean Harlow, Hedy Lamarr, and Ginger Rogers. To do so, she inadequately attempts to emulate Hedy Lamarr's hairstyle, but when she pulls out a front tooth on candy at the movies, she quits going because "there I was, five months pregnant, trying to look like Jean Harlow, and a front tooth gone. Everything went then . . . and [I] settled down to just being ugly" (2135). Her daughter Pecola, considered an ugly child by everyone in the community, admires Shirley Temple and yearns for blue eyes just like those of the child star; her desire will indirectly lead to her madness. A theme of the novel is the serious consequences to African Americans of attempting to remake themselves into the images created by and within the white culture. By using the names of

actual film stars, Morrison creates a credible dilemma for the fictional characters and also blurs the line between the viewer's world and the screen world.

Morrison will also use actual names from business, political, literary, mythical, and historical worlds to provide a connection to community in the broadest sense. In naming from such a variety of worlds, Morrison echoes John Donne's philosophy that no man is an island and establishes social, religious, and political contexts for her smaller communities. The allusions she provides tie fictive characters to the larger family of man, whether real or literary. A very few names from Morrison's extensive naming that fit this practice are Ophelia, Dante, Catherine the Great, Dillinger, Liszt, the Virgin Mary, Chopin, Eurydice, Charlemagne, Eleanor Roosevelt, Dred Scott, Neanderthals, Picasso, and Henry Ford. The historical names in the list include rulers, an artist, musicians, a gangster, religious and political figures; they are names that cover a time span from a prehistoric era to the twentieth century. The breadth of historical names reminds readers of their own place in the vast human community, one that existed prior to their births and one that will continue past their deaths. The weaving of a least 60 historical figures through the six novels tends to ground Morrison's fictive characters in a "real" world, often blurring the line between reality and

fiction just as she blurred the line between reality and film.

Morrison's communities are grounded, for the most part, in the present. However, names reflect not only her characters' relationships to their present but also to their past. When Morrison names from the past, it is not an arbitrary naming. Instead, she names in order to differentiate between the past of the white man who has imposed his names on the African American and the past of the African Americans themselves. With this attention to the past, she stresses the heritages of each cultural group and the relationship of names to heritage.

Place names establish not only a sense of community in Morrison but a sense of heritage also. When Milkman (Song) first hears of Ryna's Gulch and the story of the woman who went mad because of lost love, it means no more to him than the story of the slave Solomon who leaped into the air to fly home to Africa. However, as he listens to the song the children of Shalimar sing and then relates it to his recently discovered family connections, Ryna's Gulch and Solomon's Leap become *his*, parts of his heritage that allow him to discover where he has come from and who he is. The heritage has not been lost because it exists, even if indecipherable for awhile, in the names of places, actual locales that themselves hold stories.

Morrison also uses place names to position her characters on a time line that stretches farther back than Milkman's discovery. Joe and Violet Trace (Jazz), who picked cotton and farmed another man's crops, migrate to New York City from Vesper County, Virginia, a place name that forms an oxymoron. Vesper County connotes a place of peaceful worship, yet the novel's setting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century South, in Virginia, implies that for an African American it was anything but that. The name, then, contains the past and present of the Traces and a majority of other African Americans who sought sanctuary in the North. However, Morrison subtly connects Joe and Violet to other biblical place names in Virginia--some actual, some not--Goshen, Palestine, Crossland and Rome. That so many biblical names are found in a place from which the Traces and others flee might imply that this biblical heritage is insufficient to sustain them through adversity so they must leave and attempt to find strength in the North.

Place names can also establish a continuing reminder of a heritage of oppression. The Bottom's name, a constant reminder of the white man's duping, is even more pointed when juxtaposed with the white community's name, Medallion, which suggests a medal, an award for reaching the top. The top/bottom : white/African American analogy of oppressor/ oppression is clear through the naming.

At first glance, Sweet Home (Beloved), a farm worked by slave labor, would appear to be a place where the slave heritage had been broken. The Garners treated their slaves well and truly believed they were providing a sweet home for the men and women they owned, never factoring in the irony of "sweet" human ownership. The farm name takes on stronger ironic overtones when the schoolteacher and nephews arrive, and their cruelty exemplifies the heritage of oppression the slaves were more accustomed to. Sethe, Sixo, Halle and Paul D knew there could be no sweet home as long as slavery, their heritage, existed.

The Bible and its religious heritage play an important role in African-American naming since white owners frequently used biblical names for their slaves.

> The desire to propagate the Faith was undoubtedly an important motivating factor, especially amongst Spanish Catholics; however, an element of fancy may have entered in. (Puckett 8)

The Bible was also a source for the African-American naming practice of "the blind selection of names from the Bible for every child other than the first male" (Song of Solomon 18). In Song of Solomon the first Macon Dead uses this method to name his newborn daughter Pilate. First Corinthians, Magdalene, Ruth, Hagar and Reba were named according to this ritual or a variation of it. A biblical heritage through names is found in each of Morrison's six

novels but not to the same degree. It appears more prominently in Tar Baby and Song of Solomon, two novels with the theme of the importance of the relationship between heritage and identity. Ruth Rosenberg notes that in Song of Solomon a reader would expect, because of the title, a biblical allegory. However, Morrison

> joyously subverts that expectation, gaily frustrating all searches for her onoma [names] in Biblical concordances. In doing this, she is making a comment on the Black use of the white Book. By stressing the self-referentiality of her names, she protects the integrity of her fiction. It can only be explicated on its own terms, not on ours. (216)

Morrison has said that in this novel the biblical names were used "'to show the impact of the Bible on the lives of Black people, their awe and respect for it coupled with their ability to distort it for their own purposes'" (qtd. in Wilentz 90).

And distort it she does in all her fiction. If readers expect a one to one correspondence between a biblical namesake and the Morrison character, they will usually be in for a surprise. In her first novel, The Bluest Eye, God, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary are evoked to provide a context for Pauline, the Fishers, Miss Marie, Marie Appolonaire, Samson Fuller, and Luke Angelina--all names connected to the Bible. In this first work, Morrison begins the distortion which becomes a signature of her biblical naming. Samson Fuller is a weak character who abandons his pregnant girl

friend and later denies his son Cholly. His lack of inner strength belies the physical strength of his namesake. Pauline Breedlove uses the church only as a means of defense against her husband, and her name is another one that does not correspond to the biblical Paul who loved and died for the early Christian church. Miss Marie, a name derived from the Virgin Mary, is one of the three town whores. One of the strongest symbols of the early church is the fish; yet the Fishers are a white family who represent everything the African-American characters do not have. There is no hope, love, or charity connected with their characterization.

Morrison follows the same distorting pattern in Song of Solomon. A strong biblical allusion is implied in the title but Solomon's song is one that children sing about a flying African. Neither First Corinthians, Ruth, Magdalene called Lena, Pilate, Hagar or Reba parallel their biblical counterparts. Instead, Morrison often distorts through irony. For example, Pilate is no metaphoric Christ killer but is instead a life giver. Ruth's loyally is not to a mother-in-law but to the memory of the father she may have loved incestuously. Morrison's childless Hagar bears the name of the mother of Ishmael, a son of Abraham.

The names for Marie Appolonaire, Maureen (Bluest Eye), Marie Therese, Margaret (Tar Baby) and Miss Marie (Bluest Eye) are all derived from Mary, one of the holiest of names. Yet these derivatives belong, respectively, to a child

mentioned once, a mulatto, a blind island washwoman, a child abuser, and a whore. The characters who bear a derivative of the name Mary range from a child to a whore, indicating the extent to which Morrison distorts biblical names, even that of the holy Mother. In fact, in Tar Baby the name Mary is so prevalent among the female islanders that it becomes a generic name for the women Gideon brings to L'Arbe de la Croix. "Ondine tried, unsuccessfully, for months to get a Mary who would work inside" (34). Such derivatives and diminutives indicate a reduction of the power of the name and therefore a reduction in the power of the Bible.

And overall, that appears to be Morrison's intent with her biblical names. Certainly, she acknowledges by using them that the Bible is part of the past, of the heritage passed on by the white man to the slaves. However, she undercuts its importance through distortion to proclaim that the Bible's heritage is insufficient in and of itself. It lacks power to sustain an entire people, to give them an adequate identity. It is a heritage that is incomplete and one that often requires supplementing.

In Sula, when the biblical names Hannah (Sula's mother) and Shadrack (veteran who survived WWI) fail to adequately define the characters, Morrison turns to other cultures' heritages. The biblical Hannah, who dedicated her son Samuel to God, bore little resemblance to Morrison's Hannah whose frequent sexual encounters prompted Karen F. Stein to

refer to her as a "pagan earth-goddess" (227), an indirect acknowledgement of Morrison's reliance on another culture's mythology to more fully develop her character. On the other hand, there is an obvious connection between Shadrack's war experiences and the biblical Shadrack who escaped the fiery furnace. However, that allusion seems inadequate for a character Morrison weaves throughout the novel and one she obviously connects with her protagonist. Because Shadrack lives near the river and is a fisherman, it is more probable that Morrison's characterization is also meant to suggest a "West African Water Priest who represents and speaks for a river god" (Lewis 318). With each character, the biblical name is a limiting one, offering at best only irony with Hannah or a superficial parallel with Shadrack. To explore the depths of both characters, Morrison moves beyond the biblical context and incorporates myth and folklore more heavily. By itself, the Judeo-Christian world is not enough; other cultures must be taken into account. The community must be expanded.

In the same vein, the biblical King Solomon is too weak an allusion to sustain Morrison's symbol for freedom from slavery (Song of Solomon). The name of the king who dispenses wisdom, tells tales, and sings songs, suggests the contemplative rather than the active life. And a man of action is what Morrison requires as the catalyst for Milkman's epiphany, his discovery of his heritage. To give

her character wings, she moves to the world of African folklore for the legend of the African tribe that could fly. Another biblical name rendered inadequate is Joshua, "Jehovah is salvation" (Beloved). Joshua's master claimed his wife for a brief affair, an affair that nearly led Joshua to kill her. When he found no salvation from the emotional torture he suffered, he changed his name to Stamp Paid, absolving himself of any debt to the white culture. Neither the biblical nor the white heritage is strong enough for Stamp Paid's present circumstances so he affects his own salvation through renaming.

However, in her use of the Bible for naming Morrison does not always distort so strongly. Indeed, Jude Green betrays his wife (Sula); Margaret considers her son Michael to be an angel (Tar Baby); Able and Scripture Woodruff lead exemplary lives (Beloved); Eva functions as a creator (Sula); Sethe and Paul discover the love inherent in each of their names, though it is secular rather than spiritual (Beloved). There is even the possibility of redemption for several members of the L'Arbe de la Croix household (Tar Baby). At first glance, it might appear that Eloe, Florida could easily join this list. Once Son decides to stop running (Tar Baby), he yearns for his hometown, Eloe (possibly for "Elohim, God"), a small all African-American community. In the latter part of chapter seven, Morrison underscores his need to return by repeating the phrase, "He

insisted on Eloe." Even Jade's love and New York City, at first, are not strong enough to hold him; he must return to Eloe, his version of paradise. When Son joins Old Man in Eloe, the biblical overtones in these three names (Son, Old Man, Eloe) would seem to confirm that Son had finally regained his rightful place in paradise. To Morrison's readers it would appear that she had created the African-American Eden: a town filled with love and no whites. However, even this town falls short of fulfilling its biblical name. This place with its biblical heritage is not strong enough to hold Son; he is lured away by Jade, a woman who denies her African heritage. She becomes the tar baby of the African folktale and that heritage is the stronger one. As the novel ends, Son returns to the Isle des Chevalier, perhaps moving into the mythical world of the blind horsemen. By evoking legend and folklore, Morrison seems to proclaim him the Son of Africa rather than the biblical Son. With Eloe, another biblical name is distorted.

In Morrison's work, the Bible as part of African American heritage dates only to the seventeenth century when slaves were first brought to the North American colonies and received religious names. Such a recent white influence is inadequate to sustain the identity of her characters. One reason for this could be Morrison's attitude toward

> the planters . . . who insisted that their slaves not learn any of the potentially subversive tenets of Christianity (the brotherhood of all men, for instance). . . . Most masters saw religion more as a way of preventing rebellion than as a way of saving the slave's soul. (Blassingame 61-62)

The inadequacy Morrison finds in the biblical names also applies to her use of mythological names; they too date only from the slaves' association with educated white owners.

There are fewer mythological names in Morrison than biblical ones, accurately reflecting the slave naming practices of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, she employs her own naming practices by using the mythological names to misname, rename, or name insufficiently. Ajax, a Greek warrior, would appear to be a positive name for Sula's lover since he was the first man who understood her. But like his namesake, Ajax is no hero; rather than attempt to communicate his uneasiness when he feels Sula's possessiveness, he deserts her. His desertion becomes even more of a blow when Sula discovers that his name was A. Jacks; he had never been a warrior. Her grief is connected to the serious consequences of not knowing a name. Her loss intensifies when she realizes that she had lain with him "and said his name involuntarily or said it truly meaning *him*, the name she was screaming and saying was not his at all" (136). For her, the name and the man were one, inseparable. However, she realizes that she never knew

him, that she has been betrayed and, to some degree, had in turn betrayed him because

> I didn't even know his name. And if I didn't know his name, then there is nothing I did know and I have known nothing ever at all since the one thing I wanted was to know his name so how could he help but leave me since he was making love to a woman who didn't even know his name. (136)

When Jade (Tar Baby) modeled in Paris, a publicist dubbed her the "copper Venus." Instead of the compliment this name would appear to be, Morrison uses the mythological allusion to strengthen her characterization of Jade as a young woman who does not value her African-American heritage. Copper, though it obviously refers to Jade's skin color, is also an alloy, a mixture just as Jade's sense of herself is alloyed. An art historian educated at the Sorbonne, she feels more at home in the white culture than the African-American culture. Like Venus, she is beautiful, but in her modeling Jade has treated her beauty as a commodity in the white culture she prefers, has used it as another means of separating herself from her African-American community. Marie Therese's strongest condemnation of Jade is that "she has forgotten her ancient properties" (263), her heritage. By embracing the life that the sobriquet "copper Venus" implies, Jade further embraces the heritage of the culture that named her. Such naming becomes part of Morrison's condemnation of

characters like Jade, those who deny their connection to their African heritage.

The only mythological name for a pivotal character that Morrison appears to use without a strong degree of irony or of insufficiency is Circe, the midwife who serves as a guide for Milkman, an action consistent with the role her mythological namesake filled for Odysseus (Song). Circe reveals the truth about Milkman's paternal grandparents' names, thereby helping him solve the puzzle of his past. She also guides him to the cave which functions as a turning point for his search for his heritage. However, even this myth is not strong enough for Morrison's characterization. She provides an addendum to the myth in allowing Circe to exact revenge on the Butlers (reduced to lower than butler status) who killed Milkman's grandfather, Macon Dead (Jake), for his land.

In her use of biblical names, Morrison often creates allusions that rarely provide sufficient insight into the characters. She follows the same pattern with her mythological naming. In Sula, Helene Wright's name suggests the beautiful Helen of Troy, and in fact Helene inherits her Creole mother's beauty. However, after she marries Wiley, an African American, and their daughter is born, Helene is pleased the child has primarily African-American features, "her skin had dusk in it . . . she had taken the broad flat nose of Wiley . . ." (18) and is pleased that the child "had

not inherited the great beauty that was hers" (18). Helene sees no beauty in an African American. Morrison has used this allusion ironically to emphasis the influence of the white culture's concept of beauty. However, even this allusion does not fully explain Helene. In Tar Baby, Marie Therese may allude to Tieresias (Lee 357), but the only connection is the blindness that makes each a seer. Although this is an important part of Marie Therese's character, her blindness does not fully define the rich character that she is. Likewise, in Beloved Sethe's association with the Egyptian myth of Seth, which establishes a link between a cow and Sethe, does much to explain her name but the allusion only develops a partial understanding of a complex character. As these examples suggest, mythology as another part of the white culture's heritage passed to the African-American slaves through naming, is rarely adequate to sustain a strong sense of identity for Morrison's characters. Through their inadequacy, she equates the biblical and mythological worlds--two myth systems that do not fully identify the African American.

These naming systems evolved from two powerful strains of heritage found in the white culture. However, Morrison's handling of the Bible and mythology underscores that each, for her, is a superficially useful but ultimately inadequate source of naming. To bestow meaningful names on the characters that inhabit her worlds, Morrison turns from both

Palestine and Greece and looks instead to Africa and its heritage.

Oddly enough, only two characters, Pecola and Sula, have African personal names and they are not inclusive ones. Instead, the definition of each of the African names directly links each character to her community's exclusion of her. Morrison has remarked how she longs for a critic who understood her use of the words "church," "community," "ancestor," and "chorus" since her novels "come out of these things and represent how they function in the black cosmology" (McKay "An Interview" 407). In a discussion of community, Morrison remarks that the neighborhood is the source of a "life-giving, very, very strong sustenance . . . One lives, really, not so much in your house as you do outside of it, within the 'compound,' within the village, or whatever it is" (Stepto 379). With "compound" and "village," Morrison ties the communities within her "black cosmology" to Africa where, "within the tribe, individuals are free and independent, but their rights and interests are subordinate to those of the community as an entity"; in fact, "in Africa, primary duty is owed to the community" (Ayittey 16). Morrison connects an African name to the community in her first novel. In The Bluest Eye Pecola ("to break edge of vessel, to chip out, notch, strike off") is considered an ugly child by everyone in town, even her mother, so she prays fervently for blue eyes so she will be

like her idol, Shirley Temple. Although the Shirley Temple movies would have been in black and white and, therefore, her eye color indiscernible, perhaps Pecola equates white, blue eyes and love. In her obsession to change her eye color as well as through her prayers, Pecola rejects the African-American community and, instead, attempts to place herself firmly within the white culture. She is "broken" after she mistakenly believes that her prayers have been answered and that she has blue eyes and after the loss of the child conceived when her father rapes her; Pecola goes mad, a possible punishment for rejecting the community. However, Pecola is a tragic victim, a child, and the community is not blameless. Claudia, the narrator, explains how each Christmas she and her sister received

> the big, the special, the loving gift [that] was always a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll. From the clucking sounds of adults I knew that the doll represented what they thought was my fondest wish. (2076)

With their gifts, the adults (community) perpetuate the belief that the blue eyes of the white culture are superior. Therefore, through its actions of admiring those who possess blue eyes and through its inaction of not befriending and protecting Pecola, the community has aided in the chipping out, notching, striking off any sense of identity the child might have had and instead created the community scapegoat. Claudia acknowledges this when she says, "All of us-- all

who knew her-- felt so wholesome after we cleaned ourselves on her" (2183). Pecola's name reflects the consequences of the community and its members forgetting their roles as dictated by their African heritage.

For her second novel (Sula), Morrison also uses an African name for her protagonist. Like Pecola, Sula's name ("to be blighted"; "to betray") links the character to her community's exclusion. Her "blight," the birthmark on her eye, changes as she ages and what it appears to be changes according to who is naming it. After her mother's death, the community identifies the birthmark as Hannah's ashes since Hannah burned to death. The community's strong damning of Sula comes, however, when she returns after a ten year absence, which is explained only in terms of the years she attended college and lived in large cities. Like Pecola, Sula rejects the individual/community roles of the village, and many of her actions create discord. Sula moves her grandmother Eva to a nursing home, violating the traditional African belief of homage to the elderly; has a brief affair with her best friend's husband; beds, then discards other women's husbands; and, according to rumor, even sleeps with white men. When Sula rejects their norms, the community considers Sula evil and places her in the role of pariah. Sula does, according to her name, betray her best friend, her grandmother, and others in the Bottom. However, the betrayals are less damning than they might

appear on the surface since her actions were actually extensions of Sula's personality which did not coincide with her community's mores. To a degree, the community betrays Sula by not allowing her to be herself, by not taking into account her motives. In its betrayal, it also, hypocritically, uses her.

> Their conviction of Sula's evil changed them in accountable yet mysterious ways. Once the source of their personal misfortune was identified, they had leave to protect and love one another. (117)

Unlike the biblical and mythological names that were often weak or inadequate, the two African names contain their bearers' fates. There is no need to supplement them with allusions or suggestions from other cultures; the African names lack the irony so many of Morrison's biblical names possess. In her first two novels, Morrison connects two names and the concept of the community to Africa, but, as she so clearly points out through the names' relationship to defeat and betrayal, much has been lost in the 300 year separation from the Motherland.

In Morrison's third novel (Song of Solomon), she no longer uses African names, but she still connects her pivotal characters to Africa. Set in twentieth century America, the novel acknowledges through naming and folklore that Africa's role in the "black cosmology" has not diminished. The biblical heritage in Pilate's name is

inadequate to support such a strong, vital character. However, her name becomes more appropriate when examined in light of her African heritage. "Pilate has all the qualities Morrison associates with an ideal African Woman: She has stature, strength, presence." She is "tall, tall as her brother Macon, with black skin and wine-colored lips; . . . she constantly has a 'chewing stick' between her lips, much like a West African market woman" (Wilentz 86). Gay Wilentz draws attention to Pilate's mystical powers and her lack of a navel; each "allows her special privileges as a conjure woman. . . . Pilate's house resembles one in an African village compound . . . " (86). Such characterization places Pilate firmly within her African heritage; her name provides the roots that ground her there. Even though the midwife Circe insists that Pilate is an inappropriate name for a new born daughter, Pilate's father insists on keeping the name because it resembles a tall tree that will protect the smaller ones. She lives up to her name in her relationship with almost all her family members. Pilate's concoction enables Ruth to get pregnant and then her "voodoo" doll protects Ruth from Macon's attempt to abort the child; she holds a knife on a man who abuses her daughter Reba; Pilate provides whatever is in her power to make her granddaughter, Hagar, happy. For her nephew Milkman, "her role as guide and educator--as *pilot*, as her name suggests- is that of *griot*: She is guardian of

cultural and familial lore" (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 64). As pilot, as guide, her family stories connect her to the flying African song of the Shalimar children, which connects Milkman to his ancestor. Pilate's role as protector (tree) also moves her beyond her biblical name to the archetypal since the symbol of the Great Mother is the tree (Jung 81). However, in her role as griot, as pilot, Pilate's strongest connection to her heritage is through her name.

In this third novel, Morrison creates her first male protagonist, Macon Dead III, Milkman, who at age thirty realizes that he is a man with no sense of identity. Like his father, he is a "dead" man. When he searches for the gold that he thinks will allow him to escape his father's control, he instead finds a much greater treasure, an identity through his heritage and his true name. Traditionally, the first male child is named for his father, and this is how he receives his name, even though it is a misnaming. The power of naming is so strong that he takes on the characteristics of an emotionally dead individual--one who never considers his parents and sisters as anything but individuals sent to provide for his welfare; who almost nonchalantly abandons Hagar and their twelve year affair; who has no sense of who he is. However, he discovers on his quest for gold that he can trace his family line to Solomon, the flying African. In this way, he finds himself when he learns about his African ancestor. True, the name Solomon

is probably one that as a slave his great-grandfather received from his owner. However, Solomon rejects slavery and therefore the biblical slave name when he leaps into the air and flies to Africa. After Milkman makes this discovery, he too rejects the white man's name, Macon Dead, and reborn, he flies, having discovered his identity.

By her fourth novel, Tar Baby, Morrison connects characters to Africa by shifting from specific African names and from those that specifically suggest Africa to using both a nameless character and a name that is a capitalized general noun. Through this non-naming technique, the African Woman and Son appear larger than life, universalized; they could easily move from the world of fiction to the world of African culture from which they come. In Tar Baby, Morrison provides a paradigm of the ideal African Woman. Jade encounters her in a Parisian market and, like the other customers, is mesmerized by this woman who is

> much too tall. Under her long canary yellow dress . . . there was too much hip, too much bust. . . . The skin like tar against the canary yellow dress? . . . Two upside down *V's* were scored into each of her cheeks, her hair was wrapped in a gelee as yellow as her dress. . . . [There was] something in her eyes so powerful it had burnt away the eyelashes. (38)

Jade recognizes this woman as "mother/sister/she" (39). Surprisingly, Morrison, with her tendency to name even the animals that walk through her fictive worlds, does not name

this woman. The reader is forced to call her "African Woman" and in doing so universalizes her, raising her to almost mythic status because she becomes all African women. In Jade's description, the word "too" is used often because Jade, who identifies with the white world, has been a model; therefore, she recognizes that a woman with such exaggerated height, hips, breasts and skin so dark would be unacceptable in the white culture's concept of beauty. However, it is just such characteristics that make her *the* African Woman. When she scorns Jade by looking directly at her and spitting on the sidewalk, Morrison establishes the dichotomy that will permeate the novel: those who possess the ancient properties of Africa and those who do not. The "mother/sister/she", using a second sense similar to Pilate's, recognizes the empty places in Jade that do not connect her to Africa.

The male protagonist of Tar Baby,Son, as son of Old Man and as a native son of an all African American town (Eloe), has been viewed by some critics as the Son of Africa or an African prince (Rigney, Samuels and Hudson-Weems). When asked if Son "represents black culture, the black community that seems lost to our modern way of life," Morrison answered, "He represents some aspects of it" (Mckay 405), thereby connecting Son to Africa. Although his name carries biblical implications, these fade when the ending of the novel is considered. Son moves through Eloe with the

ease of a prince. However, he is tempted and lured from his paradise by Jade, a situation which establishes the tension in the novel: will he choose his African heritage or will he follow Jade to Paris to live the white life in a black body? The name Son answers the question even though the reader does not realize this until the last page when Therese demands that he choose between the horsemen of island legend and Jade, the young woman who has little connection to her heritage. He chooses when he runs toward the swamp and away from the sea that would connect him to Jade. Son's "Lickety-split. Lickety-lickety-lickety-split" (264) running motion in the final line mirrors the running of the rabbit in the tar baby stories, stories that are African folktales. Son's strong tie to an African heritage comes from his actions and his name.

With the fifth novel, Beloved, Morrison's ties to Africa through naming are not as strong as they were in the previous works. The heavy-handed irony of Sweet Home's name comes not only from the fact that slaves live there but also from the fact that these slave are descended from a sweet home, Africa, that they will probably never see. A more obvious connection to Africa is Sethe's name, an allusion to the Egyptian myth of Seth in which Isis's head is turned into a cow's, thereby connecting the cow to Sethe's mother's milk. The cow

> is often mother goddess. . . . Thus, by topsy-turvying the traditional negative stereotypes of chattel slavery, Morrison successfully elevates Sethe to the level of goddess through her selection of name alone. (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 137)

This connection to Africa through Egyptian mythology continues Morrison's weaving of the threads of African heritage into her novels through naming. A lack of a strong naming/African relationship does not indicate, however, that Morrison has lost sight of Africa. Indeed, Beloved is her strongest indictment against the evils of slavery as she focuses on the story of a mother who would kill her children rather than see them live as slaves. Morrison presents the long reaching, devastating effects of slavery on the descendants of those slaves that were uprooted from their homeland. Sweet Home's and Sethe's names serve as subtle reminders of the African heritage that each slave carries within him/her.

After the 1977 publication of Song of Solomon, Morrison answered an interviewer's question about naming in that novel by explaining that she never knew the names of her father's friends because

> they used other names. A part of that had to do with cultural orphanage, part of it with the rejection of the name given to them under circumstances not of their choosing. If you come from Africa, your name is gone. It is particularly problematic because it is not your *name* but your family, your tribe. When you die, how can you connect with your ancestors if you have lost your name? (Leclair 375)

When she wrote her sixth novel Jazz, published a decade and a half later, Morrison echoes her own response in one of her characters. Joe, abandoned by his parents, asked his foster mother what had happened to them. She explained to the child that they left without a trace, and the young Joe thought that he was that "trace." He named himself Joe Trace because, as he told his friend Victory, when his parents returned, they would need to be able to pick him out. In his childish reasoning, their names were Trace, too, and he would be identified easily. Joe's loss of identity and his need to reclaim it suggest Morrison's concern with losing the African name and not being able to establish connection with ancestors.

In the first five novels, Morrison moved from African names to African folklore to nameless characters as connections between her characters and Africa. In her final novel, she appears to use Joe Trace as that connection. Although Joe's African heritage can be traced to his slave mother, Wild, Morrison may be alluding, instead, to two definitions of the word "trace." Trace is a noun, "a visible mark or sign of the former presence or passage of a person, thing or event" and "a barely perceivable indication of something." It is also a verb, "to make one's way; follow a path" and "to have origins; be traceable" (American Heritage Dictionary). As the African heritage names and

allusions have accumulated through five novels, it may be that in this sixth one that Morrison is using Trace not only as a name but as a directive for her African-American readers. After all, Morrison herself uses jazz not only as the title of her novel but also as a musical form that resonates through the novel. Surely she means to imply that jazz could be traced to the Southern African American and even indirectly back to Africa, becoming itself a connection to the African heritage. As a directive, Trace could implore contemporary African Americans not only to be conscious of their African heritage but also to trace it to its origin. That heritage could be the "visible mark or sign of the former presence or passage of a person, thing or event."

A connection to one's African heritage, then, is a key to the sense of wholeness for a Morrison character and the name reflects this connection. On the other hand, a name can clearly indicate that a character denies his/her African heritage. However, those who do this, consciously or unconsciously, tend to be fragmented since no character in Morrison's world can deny Africa and survive intact; for them, denial of heritage has serious consequences.

With the name, Jade, (Tar Baby) ("worn out or exhausted; fatigue; fagged out; dulled or sated by continual use or indulgence"), Morrison condemns the character's choice of a "white life" with a wealthy European lover over

life with the African Son. In Song of Solomon, the son of the flying African accepts the name bestowed on him by a drunken Union soldier, thereby turning his back on his heritage. In this misnaming, Jake becomes as dead, in terms of understanding who he is and needing to pass on his history, as the new name Macon Dead implies. Because his true name is lost, his family suffers. Since Pecola (Bluest Eye), unlike most of the characters, carries an African name, one would expect her to be one of the blessed among Morrison's characters. However, Pecola's obsession to have the blue eyes of the white culture, with the implicit denial of Africa, prepares the way for her madness. These three sever their connections to their heritages and pay a price.

Morrison's characters rarely exist in isolation. They require a community for their very existence even if that community is not always a welcoming one. Shadrack and Sula could attest to this. Indeed, for many of her characters, the community functions as a source of identity, whether positive or negative, and this identity is often located in the characters' names. However, the community does not always provide enough of a foundation for identity. For some characters, that foundation comes not from the white man's culture but from the African heritage that forms them and often names them. In their relationships to the community and to their heritage, Toni Morrison's characters

are grounded through their names to something larger and more permanent than themselves.

CHAPTER II

THE BLUEST EYE

Alice, Miss -- friend of Great Aunt Jimmy's who reads the Bible to her as she lies in her sick bed; other friends give advice on cures, but it is only Miss Alice's reading of First Corinthians that Aunt Jimmy tolerates. Alice is a variant of Adelaide, combined from the elements of "noble" and "kind" (Hanks and Hodges First). Miss Alice embodies the elements of her name in her kind treatment of her sick friend. Miss is a courtesy usually extended to unmarried Southern women of any age.

Audrey -- sixteen year old African-American girl who goes to the beauty parlor wanting hair like the movie star Hedy Lamarr's; the beautician's response is, "'Yeah, when you grow some hair like Hedy Lamarr's'" (2105). Audrey is a reduced form of an Old English name with the elements for "noble" and "strength"; its popularity declined and became associated with "tawdry" (Hanks and Hodges First). One of the major themes of the novel is the African-American woman's dependence on the white culture for a definition of beauty and acceptance. In wanting hair like a popular white movie star's, Audrey functions as a victim of this dependence. Therefore, she is not displaying any noble

strength in terms of being proud of her heritage. The beautician knows this; Audrey's hair cannot be manipulated into Lamarr's style anymore that she can be white like Hedy Lamarr. This incident parallels Pauline Breedlove's obsession with the movies, her Jean Harlow hairstyle and Pecola's desire for blue eyes.

Auntie Julia -- Della Jones's aunt who walks the streets of Lorain in her bonnet at all hours, talking to herself, but the County will not commit her because she is not harming anyone. Mrs. MacTeer and her neighbors, who are obviously not kin, refer to the old woman as Auntie Julia, probably following the African practice of addressing all older people as "Uncle" or "Aunty" whether or not they were relatives (Puckett Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro 23).

baby -- daughter of the Fishers, Pauline Breedlove's employers, a well-to-do white family. Upset when she enters her kitchen and sees three black children, Pecola, Frieda and Claudia, the child anxiously calls for Pauline or Polly, as the Fishers call her. This

> little girl, smaller and younger than all of us [Pecola, Frieda, Claudia]. . . . wore a pink sunback dress and pink fluffy bedroom slippers with two bunny ears pointed up from the tips. Her hair was corn yellow and bound in a thick ribbon. (2126)

When Pecola accidentally knocks over a hot cobbler, Pauline grabs her daughter Pecola's arm, slaps and verbally abuses her. This frightens the young girl, but Pauline rushes to comfort the crying Fisher child with "'Hush, baby, hush . . . Don't cry no more. Polly will change it'" (2126). Even though the child is addressed as "baby," this is probably not a given name since the lower case "b" is used. Morrison uses the lower case in only one other name, dewey (Sula), to develop character and that name is used throughout the novel. Morrison's choice of "baby" rather than a specific name in this episode is designed to show Pauline's affection and concern for the inhabitants of the ordered white world of the Fisher home over any concerns for her own daughter. Baby is probably a term of endearment instead of a given name.

Bay Boy -- one of a small group of schoolboys who tease Pecola with "'Black e mo. Black e mo. Yadaddsleepsnekked. Black e mo black e mo ya dadd sleeps nekked. Black e mo....'" (2102). Since there is little indication that Bay Boy is a nickname, it is probably his given name. In Newbell Puckett's Black Names in America, each list of slave and freed slave names is divided into seven categories; one of these is "Geographical Location." Some of the locality names

> may have been chosen by slave parents in reference to place of birth; some, by masters to indicate place of purchase. Others refer to localities known by name rather than through contact.(43)

Although Bay Boy's parents were not slaves, his name may indicate his place of birth in the tradition of this naming practice because of Lorain, Ohio's proximity to Sandusky Bay. Claudia also calls him Bullet Head as he and three other boys taunt Pecola in the schoolyard. Since he asks, "'Who you calling Bullet Head?'", this must be the first time she has used the name and is probably doing so in a fit of anger. The name suggests her perception of his appearance or a child's angry retort.

Blue Jack -- an old drayman that Cholly sometimes rode with in his first job at Tyson's Feed and Grain Store. Blue Jack often shared stories of his past with Cholly. Because of this, Trudier Harris views Blue Jack as "an active tradition bearer" ("Reconnecting Fragments . . . " 71). Cholly loved Blue Jack. When he decided to leave home after he had been caught having sex with Darlene by the hunters, Cholly needed to talk to someone, and his first thought was of Blue. But Blue had been drinking too much by then, and Cholly really doubted that he would reveal his shame to Blue who, according to his own accounts, had once been so successful with women. Blue could be a reference to a mood, such as feeling blue. However, the Oxford English Dictionary also

includes under "blue" the phrase "true blue" which is defined as "faithful, stanch, and unwavering; sterling, genuine, real." This summarizes the boy/old man relationship, especially when Blue says, as they eat the watermelon, "'Come on, boy. Let's you and me eat the heart'" (2142). Even though Jack is a nickname for John, his name could derive from the African practice of giving children day names, for the weekday on which they were born. "Quaco, the male day name for Wednesday, was also commonly found during the Colonial period. But later Quaco became Jacco, Jacky, and Jack" (Holloway and Vass 80-81).

Breedlove, Cholly -- husband to Pauline, father to Sammy and Pecola, whom he rapes. When he was four days old, Cholly's mother left him on a junk pile. Although he was reared by a loving Great Aunt Jimmy, the events of his life following her death, especially his father's denial of him, led Cholly to become a mean, cruel man who once burned his house, beat his wife, and consequently, put his family outdoors, which to the townspeople of Lorain, Ohio, "catapulted [him] beyond the reaches of human consideration" (2075). Mrs. MacTeer calls him old Dog Breedlove (2074); the narrator agrees that "he had joined the animals; was, indeed, an old dog, snake, a ratty nigger" (2075 - 2076). Because he was a nameless child when abandoned, Aunt Jimmy named him after her dead brother, Charles Breedlove.

Charles is French from the Old German carl "man" and was popularized in part because of Charlemagne (Withycomb). It was also one of the thirty-eight most frequently used Black slave male names from 1700 -1800 (Puckett 8). Cholly is probably derived from Charlie, a nickname for Charles; therefore, it is a reduction of the given name Charles just as Cholly's being called "old Dog" and "a ratty nigger" are a reduction of the definition of his name, "man." He is far removed from any association with Charlemagne. Furthermore, the surname Breedlove exudes irony when it names a family headed by a father who rapes his daughter and beats his wife, a family with a mother that loves her employer's daughter more than her own, a family with a son who runs away, a family with a daughter who goes mad after she is raped by her father. Cholly is also labeled the Stranger when he first meets his future wife. As an adolescent, Pauline (see Breedlove, Pauline Williams) listened to church hymns, "and while she tried to hold her mind on the wages of sin, her body trembled for redemption, salvation, a mysterious rebirth that would simply happen, with no effort on her part" (2129). She fantasizes about a Presence, "an all-embracing tenderness with strength and a promise of rest" and listens to Ivy's hymns "of the Stranger who *knew* . . . " (2129). Because of her dreaming and fantasizing, she was not surprised "when the Stranger, the someone, did appear out of nowhere . . ." (2129). That Stranger was

Cholly; he and Pauline fell in love, married, and left Kentucky for Ohio. In the context of the church hymns and the dreams, Stranger, capitalized as it is, takes on religious implications. Pauline looks for Cholly to be her Savior, and early in their marriage he is. However, they eventually have two children, live in poverty and forget how to love; it would appear that Stranger as Savior is used ironically. Cholly again functions as Savior, to an extent, when Pauline joins the church; "holding Cholly as a model of sin and failure, she bore him like a crown of thorns, and her children like a cross" (2137).

Breedlove, Pauline Williams -- mother of Pecola and Sammy, wife of Cholly Breedlove. When she and Cholly moved from Kentucky to Ohio, Pauline was lonely and often went to the movies where she became obsessed with the white movie stars. "'I fixed my hair up like I'd seen hers [Jean Harlow] on a magazine. . . . I looked just like her. Well, almost just like'" (2135). But when she broke a tooth on candy at the movies, she no longer cared about her appearance; she "settled down to just being ugly" (2135). She finds no pleasure in her family but does in her work for the white Fisher family that has given her a nickname (see Polly), something she had always wanted. According to Trudier Harris, Pauline's "ultimate transference of identification from blacks to whites [is] illustrated in her worship of the

'little pink-and-yellow' Fisher girl" ("Reconnecting Fragments . . . " 69). Pauline, just as her daughter will be, exemplifies Morrison's theme in the novel of the negative consequences of African Americans turning to the white culture for a definition of beauty and acceptance. Pauline is the feminine form of Paul, derived from the Latin paulus which means 'small' and is associated with Saul of Tarus (Stewart). In her perception of herself and in her indifferent, sometimes cruel treatment of her family, Pauline's soul is small. Like Saul, she does have a name change when she is nicknamed Polly, but unlike Saul/Paul there is no salvation for her. Commenting on Pauline's slapping of Pecola at the Fisher home, Keith E. Byerman notes that Morrison "as her own marker of such character, ... consistently gives them names with the diminutive suffix -ene " (footnote 2, 84) which also points to the smallness associated with her name. Williams is her maiden name.

Breedlove, Pecola -- the young African-American girl whom everyone considers ugly; she prays for blue eyes. When she was born, her mother describes her: "'I knowed she was ugly. Head full of pretty hair, but Lord she was ugly '" (2136). Because of her lack of self-worth, Pecola prays fervently for blue eyes which represent the white and African-American cultures' perceptions of beauty. When she is twelve, Pecola is raped by her father Cholly, becomes

pregnant by him, loses the child and goes mad. Her appearance and madness make her a scapegoat in the town. Claudia, the narrator, says at the end of the novel:

> All of us-- all who knew her-- felt so wholesome after we cleaned ourselves on her. We were so beautiful when we stood astride her ugliness. Her simplicity decorated us, her guilt sanctified us, her pain made us glow with health, her awkwardness made us think we had a sense of humor. (2183)

Pecola is of African origin and is also spelled Pecolia, Piccola, Piciola, Picola. In the Mende language it is a mongoose or a man with many wives, but this definition has no relevance to the character. However, in the Bobangi language, it is a verb, "To break edge of vessel, to chip out, notch, strike off" (Puckett 432). This certainly suggests the character Pecola as a vessel that is chipped off, bit by bit, destroyed by a culture that deems her ugly and therefore, worthless, and who is driven into madness by a sense of inadequacy and by incest. She is a vessel that is unable to contain much because so little is given her, especially by her Breedlove family. In the Bantu language, peola has come to mean "a very light-complexioned black girl" and in its African original meant "peel off, remove the outer skin, make bald" (Holloway and Vass 103). Although peola is not pecola, Peola is quite applicable to the character because Pecola so longed to be light skinned like Maureen Peal. Morrison is clearly aware of peola.

Maureen Peal asks Pecola if her name is the same as "'the name of the girl in Imitation of Life?'" (2103). A footnote in The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women's text of the novel notes that the movie character's name is actually Peola. Trudier Harris writes that "Pecola's formal name, reminiscent of movies and books, suggests distance rather than claiming" ("Reconnecting Fragments..." 72). She is correct because Pecola is eventually distanced from everyone, especially herself.

Cain, Woodrow -- one of the group of schoolboys, that "like a necklace of semiprecious stones" (2102) surround and taunt Pecola in the schoolyard. In calling out to her, "'Black e mo. Black e mo '" (2102), the narrator notes that "it was their contempt for their own blackness that gave the first insult its teeth" (2102). Here are victims of the African-American perception of beauty searching for another victim in Pecola. Woodrow is an English surname originally "given to someone who lives in a row of houses by a wood," but when used as a given name, it could be in honor of United States President Woodrow Wilson (Hanks and Hodges Surname). The practice of using surnames for given names comes from the British (Mencken 615), and the boy's name seems to be an example of this practice. Cain could be an allusion to the brother killing biblical character since Woodrow is, to use a slang expression, "raising cain" ("to create a great

disturbance or uproar; make trouble") in the schoolyard (The American Heritage Dictionary). The biblical Cain asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?"; the schoolboy Cain's treatment of Pecola answers, "No."

China -- one of the three whores who live in the apartment above the Breedloves; "Pecola loved them, visited them, and ran their errands. They, in turn, did not despise her" (2095). Even though Morrison does differentiate between the three through description, "China, sitting on a pale-green kitchen chair, forever and forever curling her hair" (2095), she often describes them as a group, and critics tend to discuss them as a group, especially in connection with their names. Melvin Dixon notes that they are "named for landscapes they would neither visit nor represent" (119). Barbara Hill Rigney writes that "despite their historically significant names . . . [they] live outside of history and distort time itself" (76). Keith E. Byerman identifies them as the "primary folk figures in the novel. Even their names -- Poland, China, Maginot Line--suggest larger-than life characters" (60). Wilfred D. Samuels and Clenora Hudson Weems agree with Byerman on that point but explain that "it is difficult to agree with him that their lives also reveal efforts to adapt to circumstances." Nor do they quite see the point that Chiwenye Okonjo Oguyemi makes that "the names evoke the helplessness of China, Poland, and France 'in the

face of more powerful forces' during World War II, the historical setting" of the novel (21).

Darlene -- the young girl who seduces Cholly and is having sex with him when the white hunters find them, making the young people a target of their fun and humiliating them both. But afterwards, Cholly is unable to hate the white hunters, "such an emotion would have destroyed him" (2152); instead he turns his hatred toward Darlene. Her name offers another example of Morrison's tendency to name her characters ironically. Darlene is a modern coinage, "an alteration of the affectionate nickname Darling" (Hanks and Hedges First); however, she is anything but a darling to the young Cholly as she becomes the focus of his hatred for the white hunters.

Dick -- young son in the fictional family of primer characters that Morrison uses as a structural and thematic device in this novel. "Here is the house. . . . Here is the family. Mother, Father, Dick, and Jane live in the green-and-white house. They are very happy" (2068). The entire passage (thirty-six sentences) is printed three separate times on the opening pages of the novel, each in a different form, each more difficult to decipher than the previous one. The storybook house which belongs to the white, happy storybook- style family offers a contrast to

the homes and lives of the black families in the novel, especially the Breedloves; Dick is the good son that Sammy Breedlove, who runs away from home, is not. Tens of thousands of children learned to read from similar primers and were indoctrinated into believing that this white family was the model of happiness. Such a primer was probably responsible for Pecola's desire for blue eyes, a desire that was one of the causes for her plunge into madness. Dick seems like an all-American name for an all-American child, but it is also a slang term for penis which becomes the means of destruction for Pecola Williams, Morrison's symbol for the type of people who are the opposite of those who live in the perfect primer world.

Dunion, Miss -- a neighbor who comes in after the episode of Mr. MacTeer beating Henry Washington for touching young Frieda. She suggests to Mrs. MacTeer that Frieda should be taken to a doctor "'because [she] might be ruined'" (2121). This sends the young Frieda into a crying fit because even though she does not understand the term "ruined," she associates it with her mother's talk of the "ruined" whores. I was unable to find Dunion listed in books of surnames or in the Oxford English Dictionary. Because of the character's tendency to interfere, to cause trouble, perhaps Morrison is suggesting a negativeness by playing with the color dun which "rang[es] from almost neutral brownish gray

to dull grayish brown" (The American Heritage Dictionary). Morrison may also be taking a humorous glance at human nature with the name Dunion by drawing attention to the character's neighborly suggestions for what should be "done."

Erkmeister, Miss -- the elementary school gym teacher who wears shorts in class; this bothers Maureen Peal, who in a pique comments on the teacher's bow legs. Maureen would prefer to wear shorts instead of bloomers. -meister is the German "master", which fits the schoolteacher role, schoolmaster. The erk suggests the Greek erg (pronounced as erk) the unit for energy which would apply to a gym teacher, an energy master. However, Morrison could also be playful here with a suggestion of irk for a schoolteacher that bothers one of the students.

Father -- head of the primer family which Morrison describes on page one of the novel (see Dick). "See Father. He is big and strong. Father, will you play with Jane? Father is smiling. Smile, Father, smile" (2069). If Morrison offers the idealized white middle-class Father as a contrast to the fathers in the novel, the most startling contrast would be to Cholly Breedlove whose rape of his daughter Pecola could be foreshadowed in the "Father, will you play with Jane? Father is smiling."

Fisher -- the surname of Pauline Breedlove's white employers. "It was her good fortune to find a permanent job in the home of a well-to-do family whose members were affectionate, appreciative, and generous" (2137). The Fishers' world is even more appealing than the world of Father, Mother, Dick and Jane and like their primer world, only emphasizes the deprived, empty world of Pauline's own life in the rented storefront with the cruel Cholly, the downbeaten Pecola and the ineffectual Sammy. Fisher is an occupational name in English and Yiddish; it is also a "topographic name for someone who lived near a fish weir on a river" (Hanks and Hodges Surnames 184). Anyone who lived near a source of food, like a fish weir, would almost always have food, and could be associated, perhaps, with plenty. This would be appropriate considering the role the family plays for Pauline. Pauline, too, becomes a metaphoric fisherman as she comes to them for her only source of pleasure and importance. After all, in their home "she was queen of canned vegetables" (2137) and intimidated creditors. If Fisher were stretched to account for the Christian imagery of biblical fishermen, one could say that like them, the Fisher family "saved" Pauline from a completely negative life.

Foster, Essie -- it is Essie's peach cobbler that everyone believes killed Aunt Jimmy when she appeared to be

recovering from her illness. No one blames Essie, but they all feel that the cobbler is the cause of death. I could not find Essie, even as a nickname for Esther or Ethel. Foster is a derivation of the Old English fostrian which means "to nourish" from foster food (Hanks and Hodges Surnames). Ironically, she kills rather than nourishes.

Gaines, Mrs. _____ -- a friend of Aunt Jimmy's who with Miss Alice sits by Aunt Jimmy's sick bed when she seems to be recovering. The three old women talk into the night and Morrison uses them to epitomize the experiences of African-American women of a certain era. "Their voices blended into a threnody of nostalgia about pain" (2143). As young women they had taken the demands of white women, white children, and African-American men. "But they took all of that and re-created it in their own image" (2144). When they were old, they were free. "And the lives of these old black women were synthesized in their eyes-- a puree of tragedy and humor, wickedness and serenity, truth and fantasy" (2144). Her name would suggests, then, the freedom that old black women gain when all the demands on them have stopped, and they can become their own persons.

Geraldine -- woman who moved to Lorain, Ohio when she married Louis, mother of Louis, Jr. She is another of the townspeople who, because of her own insecurities, attacks

Pecola for something she did not do. Geraldine berates Pecola when her son lies to her concerning Pecola's role in the "death" of her beloved cat. Morrison devotes three pages of the novel describing the kind of women that Geraldine represents. Like other female characters in the novel, these women spend an inordinate amount of time denying their blackness by using white beauty products, ironing their hair, going to normal school and "learn[ing] how to do the white man's work with refinement. . . . [and] how to behave," and if there is one thing they detest, it is "the dreadful funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide range of human emotions" (2113). It is not surprising then, that when Geraldine sees Pecola, she sees every poor, African-American girl she has ever seen, the girl she has never wanted to be or to have in her home. She tells the innocent child, "'Get out,'. . . 'You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house.'" (2118). Geraldine is a feminine form of Gerald which is Germanic for "spear rule" (Stewart). ". . . this plain brown girl [the type Geraldine represents] will build her nest stick by stick, make it her own inviolable world, and stand guard over its every plant, weed, and doily . . . . " (2113). Geraldine stands guard against children like Pecola who might violate her world, and she validates Keith E. Byerman's listing her name with those whom he describes as "characters, [that] Morrison consistently gives . . . names

with the diminutive suffice -ene" (footnote 2, 84). "Spear rule" also suggests masculinity; Geraldine is indeed a warrior against her African-American heritage.

Great Aunt Jimmy -- the old woman who takes Cholly Breedlove in, names and rears him when her niece leaves the four day old baby on a junk pile. Her death is the catalyst which propels the young Cholly into the world. She is Cholly's Great Aunt since her niece is his mother. However, the narrative refers to her as Aunt Jimmy, so the Aunt may be a remnant of the African tradition of addressing the elderly as Aunt or Uncle even if there is no kinship (Puckett Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro 23). The name Jimmy could be part of the tradition H.L. Mencken explains as "the fashion for inventing new and unprecedented names for girls" (617). In his discussion, Mencken notes the practice of modifying male names for females by adding suffixes that are generally regarded as feminine -- "Phillelle, Ulyssia, Lloydine, Alexanderene . . . " (620). Even though he is referring to the Southwest and even though the male name Jimmy is not modified, Mencken clearly confirms the existence of the practice of using male names for females.

Jane -- the daughter of the idealized white primer family which, as I have argued earlier, can function as a contrast

to the dysfunctional Breedloves. In the primer selection, Jane wants to play; however, the dog, cat, Mother and Father do not play with her. This lack of family interaction parallels Pecola's experiences with her parents and her brother. Even though there is no familial support for Jane, in her storybook world, "Here comes a friend. The friend will play with Jane. They will play a good game. Play, Jane, play" (2069). There are no loyal friends for Pecola who correspond to Jane's friends. Even though the MacTeers and the whores befriend her, when Pecola is faced with the death of a child which was the result of incest, Pecola slides friendless into madness. Jane is a common name, perhaps suggesting the expectations of happy family life for everyone. If so, then the contrast with Pecola is even stronger.

Johnny -- one of Miss Marie's lovers, a crook and a killer. She claims to have received money from the FBI for helping capture him. Since Miss Marie is one of the three whores who live above the Breedloves, it is not surprising that a man associated with her would possess a name that could be a variation of "john," a prostitute's client.

Jones, Della Miss -- Henry Washington had been one of her boarders before he went to live with the MacTeers. He had to move because she is incapable of looking after anyone

now; "'they say she is real bad off '" (2072). The neighborhood gossip attributes her condition to "'that old crazy nigger she married,'" who said he left because Miss Della was so clean. Now he has taken up with Peggy, one of Old Slack Bessie's girls. Even though she is married, Della is referred to as Miss, probably as a term of respect. Jones may be used to indicate Miss Della's lack of individuality since it was the most popular surname for whites and free African Americans in the nineteenth century (Puckett 62). Della first appeared in the nineteenth century and may be an arbitrary creation; if not, it could be a form of Delia or Delilah (Hanks and Hodges First). Because Miss Della's husband is lured away from her by another woman, Morrison could be naming her ironically for the biblical seductress Delilah. Such irony would be in keeping with her usual Bible naming practices.

Junie Bug -- one of the four schoolboys who taunt Pecola in the schoolyard. His given name is probably June, the legacy of an episodic name given to male and female slaves (Puckett 15), with Junie Bug a nickname from the June bug, a common summer insect, "of the subfamily Melolonthinae, having larvae that are often destructive to crops" (The American Heritage Dictionary). Like an insect, he and the others swarm around Pecola, destroying any small bit of peace she has. Pauline, Pecola's mother, mentions June bugs several

times in her memory of the day her family left Kentucky . For her, "that was the last time I seen real june bugs. These things up here ain't june bugs" (2128). Morrison could be connecting the diminishing, especially with the diminutive Junie, of the status of the insect and the status of the young, cruel male who badgers Pecola.

Li'l June -- was sent by one of Aunt Jimmy's friends to purchase some black thread which Aunt Jimmy wanted as she lay in her sick bed. This person could be male or female since June is an episodic name often used by male and female slaves (Puckett 15). Li'l is a diminutive of Little, an indication of his/her age/size. Use of the diminutive of Little may follow the tradition of giving slaves nicknames because of personal traits or peculiarities (Puckett 43).

Louis -- Geraldine's husband and father of Louis Junior. He functions primarily as a means through which Geraldine gets what she wants out of life. Therefore, it is ironic that the elements which create his name are "fame" and "warrior" and that his name is one "frequently used in French royal and noble families" (Hanks and Hodges First). There is no fame for Louis whose surname is never given,and unlike his wife, whose name means "spear rule," he is no warrior. Geraldine, though, would appreciate the relation

to French royal and noble families with the suggestion of the white world she longs to be a part of.

Louis Junior, called Junior -- young son of Geraldine and Louis who enjoys bullying girls primarily as a result of how Geraldine has reared him. She does not want him to play with the black boys, viewing them as social inferiors. Instead, she allows Louis Junior to play only with Ralph Nisensky, "who was two years younger, wore glasses, and didn't want to *do* anything" (2115). His tendency to bully is what leads him to lure Pecola into his home on the pretense of seeing kittens and maybe giving her one. There he terrorizes her with his mother's cat, and with his lies, is responsible for Geraldine's verbal attack on Pecola. Unlike his father, Louis Sr., he may be the warrior the name implies but not a courageous one. Junior designates "son of" with the emphasis on his being his father's son, but he is much more his mother's son than his father's.

M'Dear -- the healing woman who is called in when Aunt Jimmy does not respond to any other folk treatments, "a competent midwife and decisive diagnostician. Few could remember when M'Dear was not around" (2143). Trudier Harris writes:

> M'Dear is also reminiscent of historical folk communities where local healers, or conjurers, or voodoo doctors usually had distinctive physical characteristics or deformities that set them apart from

> others in the community. ("Reconnecting Fragments . .." 70)

She stands a straight six feet tall with "four big white knots of hair [which] gave power and authority to her soft black face" (2143). Her diagnosis for Aunt Jimmy, "you done caught cold in your womb" and her prescription "drink pot liquor and nothing else" (2143), go unchallenged. Two nights later when Aunt Jimmy is feeling better, she, Miss Alice, and Mrs. Gaines discuss "M'Dears infallibility" (2143), which appears to be the community's attitude toward the old woman. M'Dear, a diminutive of My Dear, is probably her given name, possibly indicating her mother's joy at her birth. It proves an apt name considering her stature in the neighborhood because when Aunt Jimmy dies, the death is accepted as the result of Aunt Jimmy's unwisely eating the cobbler rather than any fallibility on M'Dear's part. M'Dear fits Morrison's definition of ancestors as not necessarily just parents, but "timeless people whose relationships to the characters are benevolent, instructive, and protective, and they provide a certain kind of wisdom" ("Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" 343).

MacTeer, Mr. _____ -- father of Claudia and Frieda, husband to Mrs. MacTeer, a hard working man who rarely smiles. When he learns that Henry Washington has inappropriately touched his young daughter,Frieda, Mr.

MacTeer, "threw [the] old tricycle at his head and knocked him off the porch" (2121). MacTeer is a Scottish name, with the Mac meaning son of. The Scots Dictionary defines teer as a verb, meaning "to tease; to hurry along, to bustle about; to work hard and with speed; to rage"; as a noun, it is defined as "a great hurry; a raging storm." Mr. MacTeer becomes the raging storm when a member of his family is threatened. In other places in the novel, the European surnames seem designed to draw attention to their "foreignness" rather than to any definition. However, with MacTeer, Morrison emphasizes the connection between name and character since "in their naming the Negroes have followed the English and Welsh precedents . . . . Scotch appellations have either declined in use or have been Anglicized" (Barker 172).

MacTeer, Mrs. _____ -- mother of Claudia and Frieda, wife to Mr. MacTeer. Unlike Geraldine, she does not coddle her children. When Claudia remembers her childhood, she remembers her mother's fussiness but also remembers "somebody with hands who does not want me to die" (2072). Even when gossiping with the neighbors, Mrs. MacTeer appears to always be busy. As she works, she talks to herself, verbalizing her thoughts on the problems at hand; she also often sings. The MacTeers take Pecola in when Cholly burns the Breedlove home. When she is with them, Pecola

menstruates for the first time, and it is Mrs. MacTeer who takes charge. The surname MacTeer (see MacTeer, Mr.), with its emphasis on action, certainly applies to Mrs. MacTeer as she bustles around complaining about who drank the milk, screaming at Miss Dunion, fussing at her daughters. After Mr. MacTeer knocked Henry off the porch, Henry begins singing "Nearer My God to Thee." Mrs. MacTeer "hit him with a broom and told him to keep the Lord's name out of his mouth" (2121). According to Keith E. Byerman, the MacTeers serve as a counterpoint to the Breedloves, but while

> the Breedloves are so absorbed in variations of self-hatred that they see each other only as objects, . . . the McTeers make themselves into a family despite all the economic, psychological, and social forces opposing them. (60)

MacTeer, Claudia -- one of the narrators who looks back on a year of her childhood and relates the events of the novel. Claudia has her faults and never denies them; she tells us that when she and her sister see the little white girl next door eating bread and butter, "we stare at her, wanting her bread, but more than that wanting to poke the arrogance out of her eyes and smash the pride of ownership that curls her chewing mouth" (2070). At Christmas, she destroys white baby dolls;

> but the dismembering of dolls was not the true horror. The truly horrifying thing was the transference of the same impulses to little white girls. The indifference

> with which I could have axed them was shaken only by my desire to do so. (2078)

These are only two episodes that validate Byerman's comment that the McTeers are not "sentimentalized into the Dick-and-Jane family" of the primer (60). Claudia and Frieda befriend Pecola when Cholly burns their house and she comes to stay with them for a short period; later, they plant marigold seeds as a talisman for the safety of Pecola and her unborn baby when Pecola is pregnant following the rape by her father and the neighbors do not come to her defense. In the Bible (Timothy), Claudia is mentioned as a Roman convert (Withycombe); it is also a name derived from the Latin claudus 'lame' (Stewart). Both could be applicable. As an adult, Claudia does change, is "converted" in her attitude toward whites even though she recognizes that "the change was adjustment without improvement" (2078). This conversion is the self knowledge she gains. Although 'lame' is not applicable in any physical sense, it could be metaphorically. Claudia does not feel whole, does not feel complete when, at the end of the novel, she contemplates how she and the community contributed to Pecola's madness:

> all of our waste which we dumped on her and which she absorbed. And all of our beauty, which was hers first and which she gave to us. All of us -- all who knew her-- felt so wholesome after we cleaned ourselves on her. (2183)

MacTeer, Frieda -- older sister to Claudia, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. MacTeer. Frieda and Claudia agree on almost everything from their aggravation at Rosemary to their concern for the pregnant Pecola. Unlike Claudia, Frieda adores Shirley Temple, one of Morrison's symbols for the cultural perception that white is beautiful. Claudia notes, when Pecola had to sleep in the bed with them, that Frieda slept on the outside because she was brave; "it never occurs to her that if in her sleep her hand hangs over the edge of the bed 'something' will crawl out from under it and bite her fingers off" (2074). However, that 'something' does strike when Henry Washington touches Frieda inappropriately. The given name Frieda may be derived from Winifred or Frederick and from "peace" (Stewart) which contrasts with the raging and stormy associations of Frieda's surname (see MacTeer, Mr.). She goes from the innocence of childhood to the raging, story emotions of an adult (believing that she has been "ruined") because of a sexual impropriety. Frieda's name encapsulates not only her experiences but those of other female characters in the novel, none of whom are whole and healthy psychologically. They cannot all be assumed to be sexually dysfunctional, but assuming there is a period of innocence (peace) in everyone's childhood, the range of experiences in Frieda's name suggests those of Pecola and possibly the three whores who hate men. Males are rarely admirable characters in Morrison, so in light of

Frieda's name, Henry's behavior toward her could be an indictment against the sexual irresponsibility of males and a reminder that even an inappropriate touch has consequences.

Michelena -- obviously a young white girl, probably a classmate of Pecola's. When Pecola is deluded that she has blue eyes and talks to her inner self, she asks if her eyes are as blue as Joanna's and Michelena's. The young girl, then, becomes another example of Morrison's concern with the white standards of beauty that the African-American women long to possess. Her name may be a compound name, Michelle and Lena; each element suggests a foreign ancestry, the French-sounding Michelle and the Spanish Lena. Morrison could be using this ironically to imply that regardless of the mixture, if one just appears Caucasian, that is preferable to African American.

Miss Marie -- one of the three whores who live above the Breedloves; she is also referred to as Maginot Line. The three whores are often gossiped about by Mrs. MacTeer and the neighborhood women, which is how Claudia and Frieda gain their perceptions of the three. When they ask Miss Marie about Pecola one day, Frieda tells her, "'My mama said you ruined'" (2123). The whore throws a root beer bottle at them and laughs, "laughter at once beautiful and

frightening" (2123). Morrison individualizes each of the whores even though critics tend to treat them and their names as a group (see China). Miss Marie is a large woman, so it is not surprising that "her epithets were fond ones chosen from menus and dishes that were forever uppermost in her mind" (2095). She claims to have money because Hoover and the FBI paid her to help capture one of her boy friends who was a crook and murderer. Like the other two whores, Miss Marie pets Pecola which could account for the Miss in her name, a sign of respect from a love-starved child. Marie is a variant of Mary which is generally considered the most used name for American females (Stewart). If Morrison is being ironic, a whore named after the Virgin Mother is just that. However, it is not quite as ironic as it first seems since Miss Marie was a source of love and devotion for Pecola. Her nickname, Maginot Line, is a reference to "a line of fortifications built by France along its eastern border; the implication may be that she is 'built like a fortress'" (The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women 2109). This seems applicable since any mention of her is usually associated with her large size. Samuels and Hudson Weems argue that "because of her visible strength Miss Marie is called Maginot Line, a term that accords her respect" (21).

Mother -- the matriarch of the primer family which functions as a structural and thematic device in the novel. "Mother, Father, Dick, and Jane live in the green-and-white house. They are very happy " (2068). If Morrison means for this white, idealized Mother to function as an obvious contrast to the mothers of the novel, she is successful. Pauline Breedlove finds comfort only with her white employers, the Fisher family, not in her own home; Mrs. MacTeer loves her children but works hard, having little time to laugh or play; Geraldine controls Louis with a smothering, corrosive love; Cholly's mother deserted him when he was less than a week old. "Mother is very nice. Mother, will you play with Jane? Mother laughs. Laugh, Mother, laugh" (2068 - 2069). Even though Mother laughs, she does not play with Jane; this is the only thing she has in common with the mothers in the novel.

Nisensky, Ralph -- Louis Junior's only acceptable playmate. "Junior used to long to play with the black boys," but "gradually he came to agree with his mother that neither Bay Boy nor P.L. was good enough for him." Instead, "he played only with Ralph Nisensky, who was two years younger, wore glasses, and didn't want to *do* anything" (2115). Ralph is Germanic, combined from the elements "counsel" and "wolf" (Stewart), which is ironic since the bespectacled boy exhibits more sheep-like than wolf-like

traits. Nisensky suggests Slavic, perhaps Polish, ancestry. For Geraldine, this white boy, incompatible to Louis Junior though he may be, is preferable to the raucous African-American playmates who exhibit the funkiness that Geraldine attempts to exorcise from her son's life.

Old Honey -- hunting dog, "Some dogs howled. 'Thas them. Thas them. I know thas Old Honey'" (2150). The dog belongs to the white hunters who discovered Darlene and Cholly having sex in the woods, and only the dog's howl draws the voyeurs away. Honey could be a reference to the dog's coloring or to its disposition. However, it does provide an ironic twist that hunters could bestow such an affectionate name on an animal while referring to Cholly as "nigger" (2150) and "coon" (2151), both derogatory terms.

Old Slack Bessie -- a woman who could be a madam or a mother. Peggy, the woman who ran off with Della Jones' husband, is referred to as "one of Old Slack Bessie's girls" (2072). This could indicate that Bessie is a madam, with her "girls." However, on the next page, the neighborhood women refer to several adult women as girls, so Bessie could just be Peggy's mother. Old would refer to her age, Slack to her attitude or appearance. Bessie is a variation of Bess, a nickname for Elizabeth, a name with biblical implications, Hebrew "God-has-sworn-[a covenant]"; it

entered the English royal family in the fifteenth century and has been the name of two English queens (Stewart). If Old Bessie was indeed a madam, her name is ironic.

P.L. -- one of the children's (Claudia, Pecola, Frieda) classmates but not one of the boys who taunted Pecola in the schoolyard. For Louis Junior, "Bay Boy and P.L. had at one time been his idols. Gradually he came to agree with his mother that neither Bay Boy nor P.L. was good enough for him" (2115). With this name and O.V., Cholly's uncle, Morrison demonstrates her cultural accuracy by following the practice that H. L. Mencken notes, that often males receive "mere" initials as a given name (617).

Peal, Maureen -- the new girl in school, "a high-yellow dream child" that had hair "braided into two lynch ropes that hung down her back. She was rich, at least by our standards, as rich as the richest of the white girls, swaddled in comfort and care" (2100). Everyone from the students to the teachers adores her. Maureen appears to befriend Pecola but only wants to question her about Bay Boy's taunt that she saw her father naked. Claudia and Frieda come to Pecola's defense against Maureen verbally, "'Black? Who you calling black?'" (2107) and physically, "'You think you so cute!' . . . I [Claudia] threw my notebook at her, but it caught her in the small of her

velvet back. . . ." (2107). Maureen responds with a verbal attack on the three black girls, "'I *am* cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos. I *am* cute!'" (2107). Maureen is an Irish name, a diminutive of Mary, (Stewart) which could suggest that her high yellow complexion is the result of an interracial marriage. This light skin creates awe and adoration among the African Americans in the school, an adoration which could evoke the religiousness of Mary. Peal is an English variant of Peele, "dweller in, or near, a small fortress or fortified castle" (Smith). Maureen is certainly fortified within her light color against the life that Claudia, Frieda, and Pecola face as black females. Peal is also defined in The American Heritage Dictionary as "a loud burst of noise." Maureen's shout of "I *am* cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos. I *am* cute!'" (2107) ties in with Morrison's theme of white as the epitome of beautiful. When Maureen first arrives at school and charms the students and faculty, Claudia and Frieda are jealous; they are content at first with uglying up her name, changing Maureen Peal to Meringue Pie. "Later a minor epiphany was ours when we discovered that she had a dog tooth-- a charming one to be sure-- but a dog tooth nonetheless" (2101). They were quite pleased to discover she "had been born with six fingers on each hand and that there was a little bump where each extra one had been removed" (2101). Claudia and Frieda would snicker and call

Maureen "Six-finger-dog-tooth-Meringue Pie" behind her back. However, when Maureen shouts to Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda that she is cute and they are ugly, the sisters shout this nickname aloud; "we chanted this most powerful of our arsenal of insults . . . ." (2107).

Peggy -- from Elyria -- the woman that Miss Della Jones' husband runs off with. When the neighborhood women gossip about Miss Della's husband leaving, one tells the others that ". . . he run off with that trifling Peggy--from Elyria. You know" (2072). Her companion immediately asks, "'One of Old Slack Bessie's girls?'" (2072). If Bessie is a madame from Elyria (see Old Slack Bessie), a town south of Lorain, then location attached to a name provides a clue to profession, and by implication, character. Alone, the name Peggy has little significance to the women, but "Peggy -- from Elyria" could connote whore, based on the women's response. One of the neighborhood women refers to Peggy as a "heifer" to contrast her with Miss Della. Peggy is a pet form of Margaret which means pearl (Hanks and Hodges First) but is probably her given name. Miss Della's husband left her because she was too clean; perhaps Peggy is a play on piggy with a pearls before swine connection.

Poland -- one of the three prostitutes that live above the Breedloves, "Poland, forever ironing, forever singing"

(2095). As she and China respond to one of Miss Marie's jokes, "Poland, who seldom spoke unless she was drunk, laughed without sound. When she was sober she hummed mostly or chanted blues songs, of which she knew many" (2096). Samuels and Hudson-Weems are correct in questioning Oguyemi's contention that the names of the three prostitues "evoke the helplessness of China, Poland, and France 'in the face of more powerful forces' during World War II, the historical setting" of the novel (21). These women are not helpless; even though they are the town pariahs, they have created a world of their own in their apartment and do support themselves. In Morrison's works, current events (World War II) are less intriguing to her than the distant past of slavery or the worlds of myth and folklore. She is more likely to use the Eastern European Poland to evoke a sense of separateness rather than evoke "immediate history."

Polly -- nickname given to Pauline (see Breedlove, Pauline Williams) by her employers, the white Fisher family. As a two year old child, Pauline had stepped on a nail which left her with an "archless foot that floppped when she walked. . . ." (2127). To her, this "explained for her many things that would have been otherwise incomprehensible: why she alone of all the children had no nickname. . . ." (2127). This lack of nicknaming may seem incomprehensible

to her since "almost every black person is known by two names: a given name and a name used only within the family circle" (Holloway and Vass 85). However, when Pauline started working for the white Fisher family, "they even gave her what she had never had -- a nickname-- Polly" (2138). Even though most of the books I consulted did not list Polly as a nickname for Pauline, Withycombe does. Polly was given as a derivation of Mal or Mally which were derived through Marie from Mary. ". . . Polly represent[s] still further variations [of Mally], probably arising from babytalk" (Stewart). Though Pauline Breedlove is extremely proud of her nickname, Cynthia A. Davis explains that "it reduces her dignity and identifies her as 'the ideal servant'" (324). Rigney argues that with the use of Polly, "the diminutive name is totally appropriate in this case, for Pauline has diminished herself through her obsequious dedication to whiteness . . . ." (44). To Melvin Dixon, the Fishers have given "her a nickname so place-specific [their home] that it signifies both the 'illusion' of privacy and its invasion each time she is called Polly" (119).

Precious Jewel -- probably one of the young girls Soaphead Church molested. After he has written his letter to God, he looks for sealing wax in a box which held "some of his most precious things"; in the box is "a powder blue grosgrain ribbon from the head of a little girl named Precious Jewel"

(2171). Though her name obviously reflects her parents' loving attitude toward her and would also qualify as an example of what H.L. Mencken called "the fashion for inventing new and unprecedented names for girls" (617), the name is ironic considering its association with a pedophile.

Prince, Dewey -- a man that Miss Marie ran away with when she was fourteen; they "lived together like married for three years" (2097). She certainly considers him worthy of his surname when she tells Pecola, "'You know all those klinker-tops you see running up here? Fifty of 'em in a bowl wouldn't make a Dewey Prince ankle bone" (2098). Prince was also a common titular name used for male slaves and by freed blacks (Puckett 16). Dewey is of uncertain origin, perhaps from Dewi, "associated with the patron saint of Wales" (Hanks and Hodges First). Dewey may have been a prince but was no saint; he left Miss Marie "to sell tail" (2098).

Reese, Bertha -- proprietor of "a small candy, snuff, and tobacco store. One brick room sitting her front yard. . . . This day she was sitting behind the counter reading a Bible in a tube of sunlight" (2109). "She was clean, quiet, and very close to total deafness" (2164). Soaphead Church rents a room from her; she owns Bob, the dog that Pecola unknowingly poisons. Bertha is "a short form of various

compound women's personal names containing the element berht famous (cognate of modern English bright)" (Hanks and Hodges First). Her only demonstration of brightness comes as she sits in that "tube of sunlight." The surname Reece but not Reese is listed in local phone directories.

Samson Fuller, Fuller Foolish -- Cholly Breedlove's father. When Cholly asked Aunt Jimmy who his father was, she explained it was that Fuller boy. But Cholly wants to know "'What name he have?'"; she responds, "'Fuller Foolish'" (2140). Realizing this is a nickname, he asks, "'I means what his given name?'" (2141). When Aunt Jimmy answers "Samson Fuller," the boy quietly asks why did she not name him for his father; she explains that he was not around when Cholly was born. However, name and identity are important to a boy left on a junk pile by his mother when he was only four days old. When Cholly decides to leave town when he thinks that Darlene may be pregnant, he then understands why his father left before he was born and decides that he must find his father because "His father would understand" (2152). After Cholly tracks his father to Macon, he is unable to tell his father, who is gambling in a back alley, that he is his son because Samson Fuller thinks Cholly is someone that has been sent to find him for Melba. "'Tell that bitch she get her money. Now, get the fuck outta my face!'" (2155). Fuller is an English occupational name for

a dresser of cloth, one who scours and thickens the "raw cloth by beating and trampling it in water" (Hanks and Hodges Surnames). Cholly is so shaken by his father's reaction to him, that he walks away, sits down on an empty crate and "soil[s] himself like a baby" (2155). When he gets to the river, "he swirled his clothes in the water and rubbed them until he thought they were clean" (2156). By his actions, Cholly, too, becomes a fuller/Fuller. The biblical Samson is suggested when Samson Fuller rants about Melba since "the weakness of Samson's moral fibre appeared in his relations with women" (Harper's Bible Dictionary).

Sugar Babe -- one of the two young girls that Soaphead Church remembers molesting. He felt that he was being playful,

> not like the people whispered. And they [the girls] didn't mind at all. Not at all. . . . If I'd been hurting them, would they have come back. Two of them, Doreen and Sugar Babe, they'd come together. (2170)

Sugar Babe could be a nickname or could possibly be similar to Precious Jewel, an example of what H.L. Mencken called "the fashion for inventing new and unprecedented names for girls" (617). This name, which suggests a confection and innocence, is ironic since Soaphead gave Sugar Babe and Doreen "mints, money, and they'd eat ice cream with their

legs open while I played with them. It was like a party" (2170).

Suky -- girl who walks with Jake in the woods while Cholly is walking with Darlene. When the newcomer Jake approached Suky, "Cholly held his breath, waiting for Suky to shut Jake up. She was good at that, and well known for her sharp tongue" (2148). However, Suky demurely accepts Jake's request. As the boys playfully pelt the girls with muscadines, they all run through the woods. Cholly realizes that Suky and Jake "are nowhere in sight" (2149). Suky was not listed in any name dictionary that I checked. But "sukey" is defined in a slang dictionary as a "lower class diminutive of Susan; sukey tawdry, a slatternly woman in fine tawdry" (Dictionary of Slang). Going into the woods and disappearing with Jake may qualify her for slatternly woman status. Sukey, Su(c)key, and Suckey are listed as slave and free black names in Black Names in America (41, 31, 26). Sukey probably evolved from the other two which may have been first given to nursing mothers.

Villanucci, Rosemary -- the little white girl who lives next door to the MacTeers. Claudia describes her as "our next door friend" but often is aggravated about and by Rosemary. In the opening pages of the novel, Rosemary

> sits in a 1939 Buick eating bread and butter. She rolls down the window to tell my sister Frieda and me that we can't come in. We stare at her, wanting her bread, but more than that wanting to poke the arrogance out of her eyes and smash the pride of ownership that curls her chewing mouth.(2070)

Rosemary came into use in America in the late nineteen century, an adaptation of a plant name from the Latin rosmarinus (Stewart). The two elements of Villanucci are "home" and "new" which in Italian have the connotation of nouveau riche. This may or may not apply; her father does own a store and she flaunts her "superiority" over the MacTeer sisters, for example, by sitting in the Buick. When one, however, looks at the name Villanucci, "villan" stands out. This, to an almost comic extent, is the role Rosemary plays in her nosiness and whining, always wanting to tattle on the MacTeer sisters. "A rustling noise in the bushes startled me, and turning toward it, I saw a pair of fascinated eyes in a dough-white face. Rosemary was watching us" (2083). When Claudia grabs her and scratches her face, "'Mrs. MacTeer! Mrs. MacTeer!' Rosemary hollered. 'Frieda and Claudia are out here playing nasty! Mrs. MacTeer! '" (2083).

Washington, Henry -- boarder at the MacTeers. When he first came, the MacTeers "loved him. Even after what came later, there was no bitterness in [their] memory of him" (2074). "What came later" applies to Henry Washington

touching Frieda MacTeer inappropriately, and Mr. MacTeer's throwing a bicycle at him. When he first came to the MacTeers, Henry's behavior toward Frieda is foreshadowed by his making a penny disappear and having the sisters search him, "poking our fingers into his socks, looking up the inside back of his coat." The MacTeers look on, smiling as they watched the girls' "hands wandering over Mr. Henry's body" (2074). Unlike Soaphead Church, he does not restrict his attentions to pre-adolescent girls. One day when Mrs. MacTeer is absent, he gives Claudia and Frieda money to go buy ice cream. They come back early and through a window see China and Miss Marie, two of the town's three prostitutes, with Henry. "In a playful manner, the way grandmothers do with babies, he was sucking the fingers of one of the women, whose laughter filled a tiny place over his head" (2109). Later, Claudia and Frieda ask him who the women were. Unlike his cherry tree chopping namesake, he lies, telling them the women were members of his Bible class. Henry, which is Germanic, means "home rule" and was a favorite name among Norman conquerors (Stewart); he is a possible conqueror until Mr. MacTeer bashes him. Henry was also the second most popular name among free Black males (Puckett 44). Washington could have the obvious tie in to George Washington but with an ironic twist considering Henry's behavior. It is a common name among blacks; Howard

T. Barker notes that "four-fifths of the Americans using the surname Washington are Negroes" (163).

Whitcomb, Sir -- a white ancestor of Elihue Micah Whitcomb (see Whitcomb, Elihue Micah); "a decaying British nobleman, who chose to disintegrate under a sun more easeful than England's, [he] introduced the white strain into the family in the early 1800's" (2161). His bastard son married a girl "of similar parentage"; together they separated themselves from anything associated with Africa--mind, body, and spirit. "They transferred this Anglophilia to the six children and sixteen grandchildren" who "with the confidence born of a conviction of superiority . . . performed well in school" (2162). The English surname, "one who came from Whitbeck (white stream), in Cumberland" (Smith), applies to the white stream which not only appears in this family line but the white stream in which many of Morrison's character (Pauline, Pecola, Frieda, Maureen) want to swim.

Whitcomb, Elihue -- "a cinnamon-eyed West Indian with lightly browned skin" (2161) who lives at Miss Bertha Reese's; a misanthrope with a sexual preference for little girls, he "dallied with the priesthood in the Anglican Church" (2160), became a caseworker, then a "'Reader, Adviser, and Interpreter of Dreams'" (2160). Because of this adviser role, Pecola comes to him with her request for

blue eyes. "Here was an ugly little girl asking for beauty. A surge of love and understanding swept through him" (2166), but he is angry that he cannot really work the miracles that he claims to be able to do. The town knows him as Soaphead Church although that is not his birth name; in fact, he does not remember where the name came from. The narrator explains that the Church could have come from his early days as a guest preacher, one without a permanent church. "But everybody knew what 'Soaphead' meant-- the tight, curly hair that took on and held a sheen and wave when pomade with soap lather"; earlier he had been described as "what one might call a very clean old man" after explaining his preference for little girls (2161). Soaphead Church's birth name was Elihue Whitcomb. His father, a religious fanatic and schoolmaster, applied his theories on "education, disciple, and the good life" to his son's upbringing. "Little Elihue learned everything he needed to know well, particularly the fine art of self-deception" (2162). After his wife Velma leaves him, Elihue unsuccessfully tries the ministry, comes to America, goes from job to job, and eventually settles in Lorain, "palming himself off as a minister" (2164). The meaning of the Hebrew Elihue is uncertain, "except that el is presumably to be taken as 'God'" (Stewart). This is appropriate not only because of his attempt at the ministry and his passing himself off as a minister but also because of his actions after Pecola asks him for blue eyes -- he

wrote a letter to God. Elihue Micah explained that "I did what You did not, could not, would not do: I looked at that ugly little black girl, and I loved her. I played You" (2170-2171). He added the Micah when he was an adult, probably as a reference to the prophet Micah since Soaphead later advertises himself as a Spiritualist. Whitcomb, a reference to a resident of an English county, alludes to the white strain in his family (see Whitcomb, Sir).

Williams, Chicken -- one of the twin sons of Ada and Fowler Willians, younger brother to Pauline Breedlove. When Pauline remembers her home in Kentucky, she notes, "they kept a few chickens" (2128). Chicken's father's name means bird catcher and his twin's name is Pie. The Williams males' names (Fowler, Chicken, Pie) are a reflection of Morrison's humor in naming.

Williams, Fowler -- Ada Williams husband, father to Chicken, Pie, and Pauline. His name, an occupational name for bird catcher (Hanks and Hodges Surname), could apply to his work in rural Alabama, where the family lived before moving to Kentucky.

Williams, Pie -- one of the twin sons of Ada and Fowler Williams, younger brother to Pauline Breedlove. His twin,

Chicken, was possibly born first; therefore, he was probably given a name that connected with his brother, Chicken.

Wilson, Buddy -- one of the four school boys (see Bay Boy, Cain, Woodrow, Junie Bug) who harass Pecola about her blackness and her father. Buddy, which indicates friend, is often a nickname but is also "used as a given name in its own right" (Hanks and Hodges First). Although he may be a friend to his male companions, he is anything but that to Pecola.

Yacobowski, Mr. -- owner of Yacobowski's Fresh Veg. Meat and Sundries Store, where Pecola goes to purchased her much loved Mary Jane candies. When he realizes that he is waiting on a young, unattractive black child, it is as if he does not see her with his blue eyes. The narrator asks:

> how can a fifty-two-year-old white immigrant storekeeper with the taste of potatoes and beer in his mouth, his mind honed on the doe-eyed Virgin Mary, his sensibilities blunted by a permanent awareness of loss *see* a little black girl? (2093)

The Slavic name Yacobowski and the narrator's words mark the storekeeper as an immigrant, an outsider. Yet he is white with blue eyes and those two things take away his outsider status. Because of his attitude and harsh words, Pecola is unable to speak to him, having to point to the Mary Janes she wants. When she leaves, "Pecola feels the inexplicable

shame ebb" (2094). His treatment of her is just one more layer of abuse that eventually leads to her madness.

CHAPTER III

SULA

Ajax -- Sula's lover who leaves when she gets too possessive. Her first encounter with him occurred when she and Nel were young girls walking by a group of men on the street; Ajax paid them the compliment of uttering "Pig meat" as they passed (50). Years later after Sula returns to Medallion, she and Ajax have an affair. In Greek mythology, Ajax was a Greek warrior who fought courageously during the Trojan War. Karen F. Stein notes that in Sula:

> many of the characters' names, like that of Ajax, conjure up heroes of literary tradition. Because, in most instances, the contemporary characters are pointedly of lesser stature than their literary predecessors, these allusions provide an ironic indication of a fall from past greatness. (226)

Ajax's fall from greatness, his desertion of Sula, is foreshadowed in his name since the mythological namesake brought dishonor upon himself on the battlefield. Morrison also foreshadows Ajax's behavior with her description of him as a "pool haunt of sinister beauty"; the reduction of his warrior status is echoed in her further description of him as "Graceful and economical in every movement, he held a place of envy with men of all ages for his magnificently foul mouth" (50). After Ajax has left her, Sula looks at

the driver's license he left behind and discovers his name is Albert Jacks, A. Jacks, which she had always mistaken for Ajax. She realizes that

> when for the first time in her life she had lain in bed with a man and said his name involuntarily or said it truly meaning *him*, the name she was screaming and saying was not his at all. (136)

Morrison emphasizes this mistaken name or misnaming by having Sula come to the conclusion that

> And if I didn't know his name, then there is nothing I did know and I have known nothing ever at all since the one thing I wanted was to know his name so how could he help but leave me since he was making love to a woman who didn't even know his name. (136)

The power of the "true" name is demonstrated in this (mis)naming of Ajax/ A. Jacks.

Betty -- Teapot's Mama (see Teapot's Mamma). "Her name was Betty but she was called Teapot's Mamma because being his mamma was her biggest failure" (113 - 114). The role of the community and its relationship to its members is a theme that runs throughout this novel. In this case, the community has named a member as a judgement of that member's mothering skills. Such a name is a reprimand, indicating the role of the community in establishing codes of conduct.

Bottom -- the African-American neighborhood located in the hills above Medallion, Ohio, during the time period of most of the events in the novel. In the present, the town golf course is displacing the Bottom. The acquisition of the neighborhood is considered "a nigger joke" (4), "which Morrison created out of a family reminiscence" that her mother told her (Gabbin 255). A white farmer offered freedom and land to one of his slaves if the slave performed some difficult work. After the slave had accomplished what the farmer wanted, he asked about his land. The farmer did not mind granting the slave his freedom but was reluctant to lose his fertile land. Therefore, he tricked the slave into forfeiting the rich valley land and choosing the rocky land in the hills by telling the man that when God looked down, the hill land was "'the bottom. That why we call it so. It's the bottom of heaven -- best land there is'" (5). The irony is obvious and as Cynthia A. Davis explains, is "another misnamed, even reversed situation, in this case the result of a white man's greedy joke" (324). Anne Bradford Warner uses the Bottom as an example when she notes that in Morrison's novels, "the names used by the dominant society have subverted or disguised the meaning of the people and places" (5). Joanne Gabbin sees the Bottom as "a place where folks preserve naming rituals. Tar Baby, Plum, the deweys, BoyBoy, Chicken Little--ironic, diminutive, affectionate names . . . ." (255). Not only is the

top/bottom naming ironic but there is also irony in that the "hilly land, where planting was backbreaking, where the soil slid down and washed away the seeds, and where the wind lingered all through the winter" (5) becomes a nurturing community. In response to critics who did not find Bottom/Medallion so, Morrison explains that she found the community "to be very nurturing for Sula. There was no other place in the world she could have lived without being harmed . . . ." (Tate 130). The white man's mistreatment of African Americans is a major theme in Morrison, whether explicitly or implicitly stated. By opening the novel with this misnaming, this "nigger joke," she establishes her viewpoint early.

BoyBoy -- Eva Peace's husband, a womanizer and drinker, who deserts her, visits briefly (less than an hour), then leaves for good. He was the only man that Eva hated; "it was hating him that kept her alive and happy" (37). Karen F. Stein is correct when she notes that his name "demonstrates his immaturity and unworthiness. While the Biblical Eve's partner was called Adam, which means 'man,' Eva's husband is only 'BoyBoy'" (228). Wilfred D. Samuels and Clenora Hudson Weems label the men in the novel "superficial, immature, untrustworthy, and anonymous, as is suggested by their names"; they classify BoyBoy as infantile (46). BoyBoy is an ironic name for the mate of so formidable woman as Eva, a

woman who would allow a train to cut off her leg in order to collect insurance money for her children.

7 Carpenter Road -- the address of the Peace house; after BoyBoy leaves her and she returns with a missing leg, Eva rebounds "through the powerful symbolic act of building her own house, establishing her own territory, the sanctum of her mind (consciousness)" (Samuels and Hudson - Weems 46). The house is built over the course of five years;

> there were rooms that had three doors, others that opened out on the porch only and were inaccessible from any other part of the house; others that you could get to only by going through somebody's bedroom. (30)

Eva's family and boarders live there; she adds boarders the same way she adds rooms, for example, her adopting the deweys. That Eva resides on Carpenter Road is not surprising, then, because not only does she build a house after the useless BoyBoy leaves, she builds a new life for herself and her children, becoming the matriarch of the Peace family (see Peace, Eva). The 7 "suggests a creative act - the power of self - creation that one would associate with the divine power of a goddess (God created His world in seven days)" (Samuel and Hudson - Weems 42).

Chicken Little -- the young boy that Sula accidentally drowns while holding him by his hands and swinging him around.

> When he slipped from her hands and sailed out over the water they could still hear his bubbly laughter. The water darkened and closed quickly over the place where Chicken Little sank. (60-61)

The children's tale of Chicken Little involves taking the news that the sky is falling to the king, but when worse events intercede, the king is never told that the sky is falling, and of course, it never does. One would expect that Sula and Nel would be remorseful over the young boy's death and that they would immediately run for help. But they do not; the sky does not fall; no one learns of their actions and they are never punished. This lack of accepting the consequences for her actions becomes a pattern in Sula's life; therefore, it appears that Morrison is using the tale behind the name as a means of foreshadowing plot and/or characterization. Chicken Little's death is treated as inconsequential, emphasizing Samuels and Hudson - Weems' labeling Chicken Little as "fearful and diminutive" as another example of their contention that men in the novel are superficial "as is suggested by their names" (46). The boy is also seen as less than human, expendable. In her argument that Shadrack and Sula function as African river priest/priestess, Vashti Crutcher Lewis believes that when

Chicken Little goes into the water, "he is sacrificed to the river god just as it was not uncommon for children to be sacrificed to river gods in Africa . . . " (319).

China -- one of the three whores from The Bluest Eye. "For even when China, the most rambunctious whore in the town, died . . . even then everybody stopped what they were doing and turned out in numbers to put the fallen sister away" (172). China's name suggests that which is foreign, outside. Morrison only mentions China in that one line, using the community's response to the death of one bearing the "foreign" name as a contrast to their reaction to Sula's death; "the day passed and no one came. The night slipped into another day and the body was still lying in Eva's bed gazing at the ceiling trying to complete a yawn" (172). In The Bluest Eye, China and the other two whores were ostracized by the "good" women of the town, yet here she is a "fallen sister." Here the community is again associated with names, demonstrating its power.

the deweys -- three young boys who come to live in Eva's house. They came with woolen caps and names given to them by their mothers, or grandmothers, or somebody's best friend.

> Eva snatched the caps off their heads and ignored their names. She looked at the first child closely, his

> wrists, the shape of his head and the temperament that showed in his eyes and said, 'Well. Look at Dewey. My my mymymy.' (37)

She named two other boys Dewey, treating them as if they were one person even though they were three different boys. One was "a deeply black boy," another "light skinned with freckles everywhere" and the third was "Half Mexican with chocolate skin and black bangs" (38). However, they eventually came to look and to act alike and even to answer to dewey (now reduced to lower case in the text). When critics discuss the deweys, they tend to label them as victims of Eva's power of naming. Karen F. Stein writes that

> To the primitive mind, knowing the names of, or giving names to, others is a means of exerting power and control over them. This power has ironic ramifications in Sula, for the naming process often has unexpected, even dangerous consequences. (226)

For Barbara Hill Rigney, a consequence of this naming power is that the deweys might have developed as separate individuals ". . . if Eva had not reduced them, truncated their potential, through her assignment of the same name for all three . . . " (45). Stein notes that like Adam, Eva takes on the task of naming;

> however, these labels hinder rather than promote the development of the people she names. The nicknames she gives to the neighbors and to her real and adopted children become the ones they are known by. When she calls each of three very different adopted children

> Dewey the similar names creates an identical fate for all of them . . . . their growth is stunted . . . .(227)

Morrison comments that the deweys are a variation of a pariah (Tate 129); this role is obviously a result of their renaming by Eva. But why dewey? The name Dewey itself is of uncertain origin and may be connected to Dewi, an association with the patron saint of Wales (Hanks and Hodges First). There's no connection there. Instead, one needs to return to the text, where Eva "looked at the first child closely, his wrists, the shape of his head and the temperament that showed in his eyes and said, 'Well. Look at Dewey. My my mymymy'" (37). It is as if she looks at this male child, sees in him a temperament she assigns to all men, is not impressed, and forever labels him and all men "dewey." Dew falls and then evaporates very quickly with the rising of the sun; it has little staying power. This naming of dewey may be a reaction to BoyBoy's leaving, and though she and Hannah love all men, Eva still seems to find a residue of BoyBoy's inconstancy in them. "They's all deweys" (38) could apply to not only the boys but also to all men. The deweys are never seen again in Medallion after the collapse of the tunnel.

Elysian Fields -- the street in New Orleans where Helene Sabat Wright lived as a child with her grandmother, Cecile

Sabat. Although Helene was born in Sundown House, a New Orleans brothel, to "a Creole whore who worked there" (17), her grandmother took her away from there and reared her until Helene married Wiley Wright and moved to Ohio (see Wright, Helene). When Cecile Sabat dies, Helene and her daughter Nel return to her grandmother's home on Elysian Fields," a Frenchified shotgun house, it sported a magnificent garden in the back and a tiny wrought-iron fence in the front. On the door hung a black crepe wreath with purple ribbon" (24). With the magnificent garden and purple ribbon, Morrison suggests Edith Hamilton's description of the mythological Elysian Fields:

> everything was delightful, soft green meadows, lovely groves, a delicious life giving air, sunlight that glowed softly purple, an abode of peace and blessedness. Here dwelt the great and good dead, heroes, poets, priests, and all who had made men remember them by helping others. (228)

However, Morrison evokes this "abode of peace and blessedness" ironically. When Helene was a child, Cecile Sabot "raised her under the dolesome eyes of a multicolored Virgin Mary, counseling her to be constantly on guard for any sign of her mother's wild blood" (17). Such an upbringing created an emotionally "dead" Helene, one who was constantly concerned with being proper and one who attempted to emulate and even encouraged her daughter to emulate the dominate white culture. She does not fit the criteria for

the mythical Elysian Fields even though she lived on a street by that name for sixteen years. When she returns to her grandmother's house, Helene meets her equally "dead" mother, whom she first sees as a "woman in a yellow dress [who] came out of the garden . . . . There was no recognition in the eyes of either" (25). Rochelle Sabat, Helen's mother, looks young for her forty-eight years, wears yellow to her dead mother's house, smells of gardenias and sprinkles her conversation with Creole. After she introduces herself to her granddaughter Nel,

> she moved closer to the mirror and stood there sweeping hair up from her neck back into its halo-like roll, and wetting with spit the ringlets that fell over her ears . . . . She struck a match, blew it out and darkened her eyebrows with the burnt head. (26)

It is obvious from her appearance, her actions, and her comments that she still lives in Sundown House or its equivalent; judged by her mother's value systems, Rochelle is not one of the good that dwells in the Elysian Fields. And in her well-meaning but ultimately destructive method of rearing her granddaughter Helene, neither is Cecile Sabot, whose death brings these other two "dead" women to Elysian Fields, a place where none of them belong. However, Morrison's ironic depiction of Cecile and Helene as residents of Elysian Fields is much harsher because of the rigid lives they lead than her depiction of the whore Rochelle.

Greene, Jude -- Nel's husband and briefly, Sula's lover. Jude was a waiter but was ambitious enough to want to work on the proposed New River Road. However, he soon realizes that because he is African American, he will never be hired. Acknowledging that he needs to be a man, he plans to marry, to have "someone sweet, industrious and loyal to shore him up. And in return he would shelter her, love her, grow old with her" (83). Jude is true to these ambitions until he is caught in the nude with Sula by his wife; he then leaves Nel. Jude suggests Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ. Stein notes that "the Biblical male names in the novel carry . . . ironic relationships to their originals" (228). But there seems less irony here than an actual association. Just as Judas betrays the Christ that he had loved, Jude betrays the goals he set for himself and betrays his wife's trust and love. This betrayal separates Nel and Sula, makes Sula more of a pariah than she already was, and demonstrates Sula's lack of responsibility for her actions. Jude as betrayer is also associated with Sula in another way; her name means to betray. Jude's surname, Greene, suggests fertility and growth; to Samuels and Hudson-Weems, it is associated with naivete (46). Here Morrison is being ironic; even though Jude and Nel do have children (fertility), their relationship is destroyed when he has sex with Sula; his naive dreams of adulthood and marriage have also been dimmed by reality. Jude becomes another male

character who could, through his name and actions, be labeled a dewey.

Greene, Nel Wright -- Sula's childhood best friend, daughter to Helene and Wiley Wright, wife to Jude Greene. One thing that Nel seems to lack throughout most of the novel is a sense of identity, a sense of who she is. Her mother, Helene Sabat Wright, is reminiscent of the women in The Bluest Eye who aspire to emulate the white culture's concept of beauty. She wants Nel, as a child, to change the shape of her African-American nose by telling her to pull it and to wear a clothespin on it to change its shape. There is little opportunity for Nel to develop an identity since "any enthusiasms that little Nel showed were calmed by the mother until she drove her daughter's imagination underground" (18). However, when she survives the indignities and experience of the trip South to her great-grandmother's funeral, Nel feels stronger; "'I'm me. I'm not their daughter. I'm not Nel. I'm me. Me.'" (28). Nel is further strengthened by her friendship with Sula. Samuels and Hudson-Weems point out that

> Nel's confidence and Sula's insecurity formed the foundation of the reciprocity that characterized their friendship, providing them with the most important relationship in their lives. (44)

Yet as a young woman pursued by Jude, Nel feels that "greater than her friendship was this new feeling of being needed by someone who saw her singly" (84). Nel, marries, then, in her search for identity. When Jude leaves, however, after his affair with Sula, "the loss of Jude is the loss of identity and the loss of life. . . . Whatever the conditions of the marriage, having his name and his body gave her an acceptable place in the community" (67 - 68). For years after Jude leaves, Nel never seems at home in her skin. Nell is derived from Eleanor (Withycombe) and is a form of Helen (Stewart). However, the name Morrison chooses for the character who has very little sense of identity, of self is the shortened Nel, not Nell. That reduction from Eleanor, Helen, Nell to Nel suggests "nil" which is defined as "nothing, zero" (The American Heritage Dictionary). Even though Nel asserts "I'm me," that is rarely the case; she is not happy when alone -- she needs either Jude or Sula to feel complete, to feel whole. Alone, her inner life is nothing, zero. Perhaps Morrison is implying that to find oneself only through others is to be nil. It is interesting to note that when Sula is dying and has her last visit with Nel, she frequently calls her Nellie, something that she rarely does in the novel. This not only demonstrates Sula's affection for Nel but also demonstrates how the name expands from Nel to Nellie when Nel is with her soulmate. Her maiden name, Wright, "is the Anglo-Saxon 'worker,

craftsman'" (Stein 227). However, it is the sound of the word that is most appropriate, considering the influence of Nel's mother on her. "Conformity, making things right (as her name 'Wright' suggests) was the operative word in Nel's home" (Samuels and Hudson - Weems 44). This rightness is not what Nel found, however; Helene prepared her more for the nihilistic inner world she unwittingly achieved. Greene, with all its positive associations, is highly ironic considering the fate of the Greene marriage.

Medallion, Ohio -- the town in which all the events of the novel take place. There is no Medallion, Ohio listed in any United States atlas that I checked. Medallion is defined as "1. a large medal 2. Any of various large ancient Greek coins 3. Something resembling a large medal, as an oval or circular design used as decoration" (The American Heritage Dictionary). By drawing attention in the first pages of the novel to the naming of the Bottom neighborhood, Morrison invites the reader to examine Medallion in a similar light. In her essay, "Rootedness: The Ancestor As Foundation," Morrison states that the town functions as a character in the novel (341), which causes the reader to ask, in light of definition one above, whether the community bestows the medal or receives it. "Medal" suggests an award, usually for meritorious or courageous action. Morrison's depiction of the town would not seem to rate commendation for either.

However, the town itself becomes the medal, the award or reward for two characters who could not exist anywhere else, Shadrack and Sula. Shadrack spends time in a military hospital following the shock of seeing a comrade's face blown off in battle in World War I. He is discharged, however, when his bed space is needed. "Twenty-two years old, weak, hot, frightened, not daring to acknowledge the fact that he didn't even know who or what he was" (12), Shadrack is eventually taken back to "Medallion, for he had been only twenty-two miles from his window, his river, and his soft voices just outside the door" (14). In light of Vashti Crutcher Lewis argument for Shadrack as African water priest (see Shadrack), this return to the town is his reward, his medal. And even though the people of the town shake their heads at his National Suicide Day, tolerate his curses as he sells them fish, even treat him as a pariah, Medallion is his home. Much the same argument can be made for Sula, especially after she returns from her ten year absence. As Morrison has said, "there was no other place in the world she could have lived without being harmed . . . ." (Tate 130). If Morrison is indeed rewarding these two characters, she is rewarding them for being true to their visions of themselves, which few characters in the novel are able to do. Melvin Dixon notes that

> the boomerang effect of the shifting moral and physical geography of Medallion, Ohio, can be seen . . . in the

> medallion Sula wears, the birthmark above her eye, the meaning of which changes according to who reads it (124);

here he supports definition three above. Dixon argues that we know little about her life while she was away for ten years "because Sula's real character, however enigmatic, comes from this community, this Medallion. It is her home and, as suggested above, her landmark" (124).

Peace, Eva -- the matriarch of the Peace family; after her ineffectual husband deserts her and she is unable to support her family, Eva is rumored to have allowed a train to cut off one of her legs as a means of getting insurance money to support her three children; such evidence supports the contention that Eva is "the archetypal 'Great Mother'" (Samuels and Hudson - Weems 38). Eva builds a sprawling home on 7 Carpentar Street where she, her three children, the deweys, and various boarders live until Sula returns from her ten year absence; Sula then moves Eva to a nursing home where she, in her nineties, is still living at the end of the novel. Eva strongly suggests the biblical Eve, and most critics discuss her in that light. Eve is probably Hebrew, "life - giving" (Stewart), which is certainly applicable to Eva Peace. The "life - giving" goes beyond the birth of her own three children, Hannah, Ralph (Plum), and Eva (Pearl). Byerman notes that "Eva sees herself as a

god figure. She held the power of life and death over her children, she created the race of deweys, she names and manipulates men as she sees fit [Tar Baby]" (65). Samuels and Hudson - Weems support similar evidence for Eva as Eve, "the mother of life." They conclude that in Morrison's work, "biblical myths are not necessarily debunked as much as they are expanded"; they "find ample evidence of this in Eva, who lives up to her name" (42). Even though Eva is Sula's grandmother, she probably functions as more of a role model for Sula than Hannah; therefore, she could be considered "life giver" to Sula who calls her "Big Momma" (92). Because Eva kills her own son, Plum, "she is also cast in the role of 'Terrible Mother.' Eva, like Eve, is inescapably the taker of life as well as the giver of life" (Samuels and Hudson - Weems 39). Morrison has said of Eva, she "is a triumphant figure, one-legged or not. She's playing God. She maims people. But she says all of the important things" (qtd in Rigney 225). Eva is also God-like in her creation of a world for herself upstairs in 7 Carpentar Street. There she is "the creator and sovereign" of the house, where she "direct[s] the lives of her children, friends, strays, and a constant stream of boarders" (30). Her sovereign throne is the rocking chair situated on a small wagon, where even though children have to look down to see her, everyone "had the impression that they were looking up at her" (31). By bestowing a variation

of the name of the first woman on her, Morrison provides Eva with a stamp of approval for such a creation, tying Eva more into the archetypal Great Mother than the Terrible Mother. Morrison's women will tend to create worlds in which to escape. Her surname, Peace, suggests absence from strife, an "inner contentment" (The American Heritage Dictionary). Such a definition is not applicable to Eva who deliberately loses a leg to support her family; who kills her son; who despite her handicap, throws herself from an upstairs window, then drags herself on the ground in an attempt to save her burning daughter. Her life, instead of being peaceful as the surname suggests, is a chaotic one which is consistent with the creation implicit in her given name.

Peace, Hannah -- Eva's first daughter, mother to Sula; her husband Rekus died when Sula was three years old. She was a woman who "simply refused to live without the attentions of a man", one who "rippled with sex" (42), one who had many lovers after her husband's death. Because the house on Carpentar Street is crowded with family and boarders, Hannah will have sex in any convenient place. Through her example, "she taught Sula that sex was pleasant and frequent, but otherwise unremarkable" (44). Hannah dies when her dress accidentally catches fire. Her given name is a form of Hanani, "(God) has favored me" (Withycombe). In the Bible, Hannah was the mother of the prophet Samuel, whom she

dedicated to God as fulfillment of her promise that if she were to have a son, she would dedicate him to God; she had five other children (Harper's Bible Dictionary). Morrison's use of the biblical Eve for Eva supports the contention that "in Morrison's canon biblical myths are not necessarily debunked as much as they are expanded" (Samuels and Hudson - Weems 42). However, there is no such expansion with Hannah's name. Hannah's difficult childhood, her husband's death, her relationship with the daughter whom she loves but does not like, and her death by fire hardly make her a candidate for one whom God favors. Unlike the biblical Hannah, she has only one daughter who is in no way remotely dedicated to God. Morrison may be drawing attention to the practice of white slave owners giving biblical and Christian names to their slaves; Hannah was one of the most popular names for female slaves (Puckett 8,12). It is more likely, however, that here she names ironically, since, as Karen F. Stein notes, Hannah "is a pagan earth-goddess" (227). There is a sense that Eva and Hannah are not especially close, or that Hannah does not fully understand her mother. Even though Eva sacrificed a leg for her children, Hannah once asked her mother, "'Mamma, did you ever love us?'" (67). She also asked Eva, "'What'd you kill Plum for, Mamma?'" (70). Morrison's depiction of Hannah as a pagan earth-goddess could be a means of widening the separation of Hannah from Eve/Eva, the biblical "mother," perhaps as an

acknowledgement of the pagan/Christian dichotomy. Hannah is known by Peace rather than her husband's surname. Morrison writes that "those Peace women loved all men"; "the Peace women simply loved maleness . . ." (41). This indicates Eva's power as matriarch and demonstrates the idea that the grandmother had "a commanding position in most Negro life; she may bring the children up under her name rather than the father's" (Barker 171). This is another way in which Morrison, through naming, has established the female dominance that is usually found in her work.

Peace, Ralph (Plum) -- Eva Peace's only son; his given name is Ralph but Eva called him Plum, and with her power of naming, that is what everyone called him. Plum served in World War I but did not return to Medallion until 1920; after his return, it becomes obvious that he is addicted to drugs. In the year following his return, he steadily deteriorates. One night Eva goes to his room, cries as she holds her sleepy son tightly, pours kerosene over him, lights a match, leaves, and locks the door. When Hannah asks Eva why she killed him, Eva answered that "he wanted to crawl back in my womb and well . . . I ain't got the room no more even if he could do it" (71); she calls him "Sweet Plum. My baby boy" (72). Over fifty years later, when Nel visits Eva in the nursing home, Eva accuses Nel of killing Chicken Little and tells her that she heard the news from

"Plum. Sweet Plum. He tells me things" (169). His given name is Ralph, formed from the Germanic elements "counsel" and "wolf" (Stewart) which could reflect Eva's expectations for her only son. However, with her proclivity for renaming, she calls him Plum. Barbara Hill Rigney equates this name with weakness when she writes, "That Eva murders her son is an extension of the symbolic fact that she has already emasculated and rendered him infantile by calling him 'Sweet Plum'" (45). He seems more closely associated, then, with his grandfather BoyBoy than with his own name, Ralph. Plum's death by fire "recalls Western mythologies of death and rebirth" with the smell, the eagle wing, "Plum's dirgelike lullaby" and the comparison of Eva's movements to those of a heron. These elements "recall the purple-colored (note the significant use of the name Plum) phoenix . . . whose power lies in its ability to die and resurrect itself" (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 41). Plum is resurrected in the sense that he still communicates with his mother. A name which suggests Western myth given to the son of a mother whose name is so strongly biblical, demonstrates the ever widening circle of worlds from which Morrison names her community. The surname Peace is ironic when the last years of his life plus his death are considered.

Peace, Sula Mae -- Nel's best childhood friend, Eva's granddaughter, and Hannah's daughter. Sula is a female

African name, found in the Bobangi, Kongo, Lolo, Ngala, and Arabic languages (Puckett 449-50). In Bobangi, it is defined, in part, as "to alter from proper condition to a worse one, be blighted" (Puckett 449). Even though Sula's youth in Eva Peace's house on Carpentar Street would not necessarily be labeled as proper condition, Sula's life when she returns as an adult is a worse condition in terms of how she is treated by the community. When she and Nel are young girls,

> because each had discovered years before that they were neither white nor male, and that all freedom and triumph was forbidden to them, they had set about creating something to be. (52)

Nel set out through her marriage to Jude to conform to community standards of "proper condition," just as her mother had. When Eva tells Sula on her return to Medallion that Sula needs to marry, have babies, in fact, live that "proper condition," Sula answers that "'I don't want to make somebody else. I want to make myself'" (92). It is this making of herself, not accepting responsibility for what she does and not worrying about the "proper condition" that leads her to a "worse" condition, one of pariah. When Sula has sex with her best friend's husband, when she easily discards him and other women's husbands, when she puts her grandmother Eva in a nursing home, when the men say she slept with white men, the community calls her roach and then

bitch. She represents evil for them, but "as always the black people looked at evil stony-eyed and let it run" (113). That the proper condition has moved to worse is evident when Sula dies. "The death of Sula Peace was the best news folks up in the Bottom had had since the promise of work at the tunnel" (150). The second part of the definition is "be blighted." Sula's ever changing birthmark is her blight; the birthmark changes as she ages and what it is changes according to who is looking at it. Early, it is a rose, then "the scary black thing over her eye" (97 - 98) when she returns; Jude identifies it as a copperhead, a rattlesnake, and after the community has elevated Sula to pariah status, it sees her mother's ashes in it. Except for the rose of her childhood, the only other positive interpretation of it is Shadrack's calling it a tadpole; which, according to Vashti Crutcher Lewis, links the two as African water spirits. In Ngala, Sula means betray, a definition that Morrison's character lives up to. After Sula's return to Medallion, she has an affair with her best friend's husband, Jude. That his name is related to the betrayal of Christ strengthens her role as betrayer. However, Sula has little sense of herself in this role.

> She had no thought at all of causing Nel pain when she bedded down with Jude. They had always shared the affection of other people: compared how a boy kissed, what line he used with one and then the other. . . .

> she was ill prepared for the possessiveness of the one person she felt close to. (119)

Sula also could be said to betray Eva when she has herself appointed her grandmother's guardian and places her in a nursing home. One person that Sula did not betray, however, was herself; ". . . she lived out her days exploring her own thoughts and emotions, giving them full reign, feeling no obligation to please anybody unless their pleasure pleased her" (118). Sula seems to understand that "she had no center, no speck around which to grow" (119) and lives as she wants within that framework. As she lies in Eva's bed dying, she tells Nel, "'I sure did live in this world'" (143). She tells Nel that all the colored women in the country are dying, but they are stumps compared to Sula's redwood. Nel thinks this must be lonely, but Sula answers, "'Yes. But my lonely is *mine*. Now your lonely is somebody else's. Made by somebody else and handed to you. Ain't that something? A secondhand lonely '" (143). Like her mother, Sula takes Eva's surname, and like all the other members of the Peace family, the name is ironic when applied to the chaos that is her life. Perhaps Morrison, through these layers of irony, is making the point that there is no peace in the life of an African American, male or female. Vashti Crutcher Lewis notes that

> Knowing the Africanness of the major character's name adds a dimension that clarifies much of the mystery of the novel for the reader and places a demand on the critic to search for a blueprint for the novel based upon an African world-view -- a blueprint that is sorely needed for African-American fiction as people of African descent wrestle with problems of identity, as we move into the twenty-first century. (316 -317)

Reed, Buckland -- one of Eva Peace's gentlemen callers, a contemporary of hers; he is probably not a suitor since a Mrs. Reed is mentioned later in the novel. Buck can be defined as "a male Negro" (The Century Dictionary) which would lead to the translation of his given name as land of the male Negro. The surname Reed could come from "tall grasses having jointed, hollow stalks" (The American Heritage Dictionary) which might with "tall" and "stalk" imply height and straightness. A combination of the names casts a positive light on the African American male. However, most of the other male names have been diminutives, names suggesting weakness, especially those of the young males. Perhaps because Buckland Reed is a contemporary of Eva's, Morrison is holding him up to show what malehood was (or could be) before it was reduced by BoyBoy, Chicken Little, Sweet Plum and Jude Greene. On the other hand, with her bent toward irony, Morrison could be equating Eva's friend with all the other males. Like the deweys, they all belong to the same land of the male Negro, and like the reed, have a hollow stalk.

Sabat, Rochelle -- Helene Sabat Wright's mother, Cecile Sabat's daughter. Rochelle worked and lived at Sundown House, a brothel in New Orleans, as a prostitute. There is little to suggest that after Cecile Sabat took Rochelle's young daughter away from her that Rochelle changed her lifestyle (see Elysian Fields). Instead, she remained steady in her life choices despite her mother's disapproval and the loss of her child. In her actions, Rochelle epitomizes the definition of her name, an apparent derivative of the French word *roche*: "rock; any hard stone or stony mass" (The New Cassell's French Dictionary). When she encounters her daughter Helene as an adult, at the time of Cecile's death, Rochelle's concerns are her own physical appearance and the question of dividing her mother's property, not a family reunion. Like her name, there is nothing yielding about her. Her surname and profession suggest the French word *sabbath*, "nocturnal meeting or nightly revels (of witches); (fig.) racket, uproar, tumult, scolding" (The New Cassell's French Dictionary), at least in her mother's perception. When Cecile Sabat took Helene from Rochelle, Cecile "raised her under the dolesome eyes of a multicolored Virgin Mary, counseling her to be constantly on guard for any sign of her mother's wild blood" (17). Cecile's lessons were well taught because Helene was devoted to leading a straight and narrow life, always attempting to conform; she faithfully passed her grandmother's lessons on

to her own daughter, Nel (see Wright, Helene). Rochelle, as her name implies, is not the steady rock of the family, but instead the unyielding rock that the other family members go around, react against. Even though she was not a physical presence in her daughter and granddaughter's lives, Rochelle was still an indirect influence, not as a role model but as a warning. In her first novel, The Bluest Eye, Morrison introduced the first variations of the mother/daughter/granddaughter relationships that are found, to some degree, in each novel. However, Sula is the only novel that contains the great-grandmother/grandmother/mother/daughter family line, perhaps to further emphasize the influence of family and of name. For the Sabats, Rochelle is the misfit, the only one drawn to the life implied in the family name; her family's response to her foreshadows the community's response to Sula later in the novel.

Shadrack -- returns from World War I, having seen a soldier's face blown off, with a fear for death and establishes National Suicide Day; he sees Chicken Little's death and feels a connection with Sula that lasts beyond her death. Shadrack is a "Babylonian name given to Hananiah, one of Daniel's three companions" in the fiery furnace (Harper's Bible Dictionary). When he emerges from the fire, the Babylonian king who had thrown him in there is in awe

and "decrees that anyone who speaks against Shadrack will be torn limb from limb" (Lewis 32-322). Like his biblical namesake, Shadrack survives the horrors of the war; however, but he does not survive unscathed. To control his fear of death, he creates National Suicide Day, and on January 3 of each year walks down Carpentar Road with a cowbell and a hangman's rope. He lives by the river and twice a week sells the fish he catches there; "the rest of the week he was drunk, loud, obscene, funny and outrageous. But he never touched anybody, never fought, never caressed" (15). Unlike their biblical counterparts, the people of Medallion do speak against him, but once they "understood the boundaries and nature of his madness, they could fit him, so to speak, into the scheme of things" (15). Morrison labeled him a variation of a pariah (Tate 129), a role he shares with Sula. Vashti Crutcher Lewis, even though she relates the biblical account of Shadrack, makes a convincing argument for Shadrack as African water priest. It is a tradition in West Africa that if someone lies unconscious for a number of days, that his spirit leaves the body and visits the ancestral world. There is no insanity associated with this regardless of the person's actions after he recovers. "On the contrary, unconsciousness bestowed a specialness and a spirituality, since the unconscious person had communed directly with the ancestral spirits" (317 - 318). Lewis contends that Shadrack's comparable experience

is his period of unconsciousness in the military hospital following his battlefield trauma. Because he lives on the river, is a fisherman, and has visited the spirit world of his ancestors, Lewis believes he assumes "the role of a divine river spirit, or more accurately, . . . a West African Water Priest who represents and speaks for a river god" (318). She argues that he functions as "river spirit for displaced African people in the Bottom who call Shadrack a lunatic and fear him" (318). Morrison's naming of Shadrack is similar to her treatment of Hannah with the biblical/pagan earth-goddess connections to her name. Here Morrison combines biblical/ African folklore. In both cases, the biblical name is a limiting one, offering at best only irony with Hannah or a superficial parallel with Shadrack. To explore the depths of both characters, she moves beyond the biblical context and incorporates myth and folklore more heavily. By itself, the Judeo-Christian world is not enough; other cultures must be taken into account, the community must be expanded.

Tar Baby -- a mountain boy, a boarder at Eva's. His only goal in life is to drink himself to death, and occasionally, with "the sweetest hill voice imaginable," he sings at prayer meeting (40). When he first came to town, he was called Pretty Johnnie, "but Eva looked at his milky skin and cornsilk hair and out of a mixture of fun and meanness

called him Tar Baby" (40). There is the obvious visual irony of the blond white man with the black tar name. However, the character Tar Baby becomes an example of the cruelty of Eva's naming and of the power of naming. His drinking never gets any better; in fact, while drunk he stumbles down the road, causes an accident, and when Ajax finds him, he is in jail "twisted up in a corner badly beaten and dressed in nothing but extremely soiled underwear" (132). These events may be what Barbara Hill Rigney had in mind when she wrote that "Tar Baby, Morrison implies, might have lived more effectively if Eva had not ridiculed his white skin and infantilized him in the same stroke with her whimsical naming" (45). He dies in the tunnel on National Suicide Day.

Wright, Helene Sabat -- Nel's mother. Helene was born in a New Orleans whore house to Rochelle Sabat but was reared by her grandmother Cecile Sabat "under the dolesome eyes of a multicolored Virgin Mary, [who] counsel[ed] her to be constantly on guard for any sign of her mother's wild blood" (16). Helene kept guard not only for herself but also for her daughter Nel until Nel married. Helene is a variant of Helen of Troy, her Creole mother Rochelle's attempt to "align herself with a pagan, romantic world opposed to the Biblical Judaic one" from which her own name was possibly derived (Stein 227). This alignment is weakened when her

grandmother takes her away from her mother but is finally broken when Helene marries Wiley Wright and moves to Medallion, Ohio. "The people in the Bottom refused to say Helene. They called her Helen Wright and left it at that" (18). Helen is reduced from Helene in the same way that Nel's name is diminished from Helen, further emphasizing the power of the name and emphasizing the power of Helen's attempt to de-Africanize Nel. The diminishing of Helene to Helen is paralleled in Helene's trip to New Orleans when her grandmother dies. She and Sula board the train, Helene in her Northern Medallion, Ohio posture, but the white conductor of this southern bound train calls her "gal." This form of address is a reduction in itself, but Helene diminishes herself in front of the other African-American passengers and Nel by smiling at him. Helene loses her maiden name Sabot when she marries "Wiley Wright . . . and becomes 'right' in the sense of respectable, a pillar of the church . . . " (Stein 227). In her treatment of Helene Sabot Wright, and especially through her name, Morrison aligns Helene with women like Geraldine from The Bluest Eye who attempt to live by standards of the white world. Morrison also holds conformist Helene up as a contrast to the individual Sula, providing a more positive interpretation of Sula.

CHAPTER IV

SONG OF SOLOMON

Bains, Guitar -- Milkman Dead's best friend. There's never any mention of Guitar's given name. He is named "not cause I do play. Because I wanted to. When I was real little. So they tell me" (45). As a young, poor child, he saw a guitar, a prize for guessing the number of jellybeans in a glass jar, in a store window; "I cried for it, they said. And always asked about it" (45). Lucinda H. MacKethan notes that "Guitar's knowledge of the world grows from the desire and deprivation that were the twin sources of his name" (204). As an adult, Guitar earns a secret name with his membership in the Seven Days, a group of seven men who kill in an attempt to gain justice for every African American who is killed by a white person (see Seven Days). Each man is named for a day of the week and Guitar becomes the Sunday man. Ruth Rosenberg writes that

> in the sixties a . . . mode of naming arose from racial politics. The Black militants began to name themselves. Repudiating European forms they adopted African ones. This is fictionalized by Guitar's transformation into the Sunday Man. (219)

As Guitar explains his beliefs, Milkman tells him that he "sound[s] like that red-headed Negro named X. Why don't you

join him and call yourself Guitar X?" (161). Guitar's reply is, "'X, Bains--what difference does it make? I don't give a damn about names" (161). He then tells Milkman, "'Guitar is *my* name. Bains is the slave master's name. And I'm all of that. Slave names don't bother me; but slave status does'" (161). According to Gayl Jones, "The African myth was that black people could fly until they ate salt, introduced by the white man" (172). Guitar, whom Morrison labels a salt taster (Tate 125), has lost the ability to fly and tries to kill Milkman, who does attempt flight in the final episode of the novel. The difference between the two could be that Guitar moves away from his real name to Guitar then to just a label -- Sunday Man, but Milkman moves toward his name Solomon, learning that he is a descendent of the flying Africans who have not become salt-eaters. Guitar's surname is Bains. The French *bain* means bath and could apply to his rebirth as the Sunday Man. However, rebirth is usually a positive experience and turning into a killer, regardless of the motive, is hardly positive. However, if bain is interpreted as the homophone bane, "a cause of death, destruction, or ruin" (The American Heritage Dictionary), the surname is more applicable since Guitar does attempt to kill Milkman. The root of Guitar's failure seems to arise from not fully knowing who he is; names do make a difference, regardless of what he says.

Butler -- the family that killed Macon Dead for his land. After the Civil War, the illiterate former slave Macon Dead farmed the land that he called Lincoln's Heaven. It was such good property that he is killed for it. Macon Dead, Jr., tells Milkman that "'About eighty [acres] of it was woods. Must of been a fortune in oak and pine; maybe that's what they wanted -- the lumber, the oak and the pine'" (51). When Milkman travels to Pennsylvania and talks to the men who knew his father and grandfather, Rev. Cooper also tells him about his grandfather's murder. Concerned, Milkman asks him if the men who did the killing were caught. Rev. Cooper explains that "'everybody knew who did it. Same people Circe worked for--the Butlers.'" There was no justice because "'white folks didn't care, colored folks didn't dare'" (234). Looking for the cave, Milkman finds the Butler house that was built on his grandfather's land; it was "the biggest house he'd ever seen" . . . . and it did look like a murdurer's house. Dark, ruined, evil" (240). When he goes into the dilapidated house, he meets Circe who tells him about her former employers, the Butlers.

> 'They loved this place. Loved it. Brought pink veined marble from across the sea for it and hired men in Italy to do the chandelier . . . . They loved it. Stole for it, lied for it, killed for it. ' (249)

Such crimes were eventually punished, although not in a court of law. When the money was gone, the last of the

family, Miss Butler, killed herself. Circe lives in the house, deliberately allowing Miss Butler's thirty Weimaraners free rein so they will destroy the inside, room by room; only one room remains untouched. Morrison's device of inversion is evident in the Butler's name. The servant's name which the Butlers carried contrasted strongly with the superior position they held in the community -- they could kill, take a man's land, build a mansion on it and not suffer any immediate retribution. Circe tells Milkman that Miss Butler, the sole survivor, killed herself because "she couldn't live without servants and money and what it could buy. . . . She saw the work I did all her days and *died*, you hear me, *died* rather than live like me'" (249). The family died out rather than do the work their name implied.

Byrd, Sing -- Macon Dead's (Jake) wife, Macon and Pilate's mother. When the ghost of Pilate's father appears to her, Pilate thinks he is urging her to sing, when he says, "Sing. Sing" (148). However, he is repeating his wife's name, which Pilate does not recognize because she had never heard it. When Milkman is visiting Rev. Cooper and listening to the story of his father's past, only one man remembers his grandmother. However, Milkman does not learn her name until Circe mentions it. He is surprised and asks, "'Sing? Sing Dead. Where'd she get a name like that ?'" (245). Circe's reply is "'Where'd you get a name like yours? White people

name Negroes like race horses'" (245). In Shalimar, Virginia, Milkman also discovers that his grandmother was a Native American, "one of old Heddy's children. Heddy was all right, but she didn't like her girl playin with colored" 287). As the lyrics to the song of Solomon become clearer to Milkman, he realizes that "No--Singing Bird! That must have been her name originally -- Singing Bird" (307). When he visits Susan Byrd a second time she reveals the history of how Sing "'left on that double-team wagon with that black boy, Jake'" (325). Singing Bird's aunt is Susan Byrd, so it is obvious that in only two generations the Native American name has been anglicized from Bird to Byrd. Milkman deduces that Sing's "brother Crowell Byrd [Susan's father] was probably Crow Bird, or just Crow. They had mixed their Indian names with American sounding names" (307). Morrison uses Sing Dead to stress the importance of being true to your name and to your heritage. The change from Bird to Byrd probably would not have bothered Sing. After all, it was she who encouraged Jake to keep the mistaken name Macon Dead, believing that a new name would be the way to start a new life away from the South. However, because of this turning their backs on their past and heritage (Native American and the Flying African), both characters' names were lost. As children, Pilate and Macon never knew their mother's or father's real names, so after both parents were dead (Dead), the two had no roots, no heritage, nothing to

return to; therefore, Pilate wandered, reinvented herself while Macon grew up emotionally bankrupt. Morrison makes her point that misnaming has its price.

Byrd, Susan -- Sing Byrd's aunt, the woman who finally fits all the pieces of the puzzle of his heritage together for Milkman. When he returns to her house for a second visit, gossipy Grace Long is not there, so Susan explains the connections between Heddy, Solomon, Ryna, Jake and Sing. Michael Awkward considers Susan one of the female voices "that operate a censorious chorus" in the final chapters of the novel (495). She is not impressed by Solomon's flight but instead explains to Milkman the pain that the deserted Ryna felt; Susan also explains to him how Ryna's Gulch received its name (see Ryna's Gulch).

> That the reader should trust [Susan's] view of the magnitude of the deserted female's pain is confirmed by the reactions of Sweet and,ultimately, of Milkman, to male acts of abandonment and transcendence. (Awkward 495)

Even though her surname is "a further configuration of the flying motif" (Wilentz 96), it is indicative of being removed from her heritage. Her father was Heddy's son, whose Native American name had been Crow but was eventually changed to Crowell Byrd. That his daughter's name is Susan, which is certainly not African or Native American, demonstrates the degree to which he has separated himself

from his heritage, which Circe suggests could be mixed. Yet ironically, with her white name, Susan functions as an ancestral voice that passes down the family history to Milkman, that reveals to him not only that he is descended from the Flying Africans but that such freedom can also bring pain to those who are left behind. Perhaps Morrison feels that heritage is too strong to be completely denied.

Circe -- the midwife who was present when Pilate was born; the woman who hid Pilate and Macon in the Butler mansion after their father had been murdered by the white Butlers; the old woman who told Milkman how to find the cave where Pilate and Macon hid as children. In Greek mythology, Circe is "a most beautiful and most dangerous witch" who turns men into swine, but the wily Odysseus, with divine help, does not fall under her spell, and he and his men remain with her for a year. When it is time for the Greeks to leave, Circe uses her magic to find out what Odysseus and his men should do next (Hamilton 211 - 212). Milkman does not discover a beautiful witch when he enters the dilapidated Butler mansion but instead comes face to face with Circe,

> so old she was colorless. So old only her mouth and eyes were distinguishable features in her face. Nose, chin, cheekbones, forehead, neck all had surrendered their identity to the pleats and crochetwork of skin committed to constant change. (242)

However, "out of the toothless mouth came the strong, mellifluent voice of a twenty-year old" (243). Morrison is being true to the myth; when the enchantress Circe fell in love with Glaucus, "she wooed him with her sweetest words" (Hamilton 283). As Circe talks to Milkman, she provides him with more of his family history, telling him Sing's name, details of Pilate's birth, Macon Dead's real name, and like her namesake, she points the way to the location of the cave where Pilate and Macon hid after leaving their hiding place in the Butler house. Keith E. Byerman notes that "she is also the voice of a larger history . . . . She also shows him one way to act . . . . She has willfully outlasted the whites so as to destroy everything they found precious" (73). When the last Butler died, the servant Circe remains in their expensively decorated mansion, raising Weimaraners which she allows to roam free, destroying whatever they want to. " . . . [S]he has outlived her oppressors" (Wilentz 92); the dogs help "bring on the home the ruination and rot that characterized its owners, moral swine, in Circe's eyes" (Brenner 121). Most of the critics who comment on Circe tie her into the myth just as Brenner does. Marilyn Sander Mobley considers her more "prophetess or sibyl. Thus Morrison draws not on the image of her as a witch . . . but on her image as one who points the way" (120). Mobley also notes that "the resonances from Greek myth in her name are ironic at the same time that they suggest Morrison's

conscious use of Homeric parallels"; she argues that the abundance of "classical allusions are an example of [Morrison's] desire to 'provide the places and spaces so that the reader can participate'" (119). On Milkman's journey, by "meeting with Circe . . . his trip to the cave start[s] to alter the object of his search from the gold to his roots" (Wilentz 92). With the mythical figure of Circe, Morrison connects the rootless Milkman to the archetypal quest for identity.

Darling Street -- where Pilate, Reba, and Hagar live, "a narrow single-story house whose basement seemed to be rising from rather than settling into the ground"; there is no electricity or gas.

> At night [Pilate and Reba] lit the house with candles and kerosene lamps . . . . and [they] lived pretty much as though progress was a word that meant walking a little farther on down the road. (27)

On Milkman's first visit there, he notices that

> candles were stuck in bottles everywhere; newspaper articles and magazine pictures were nailed to the walls. But other than a rocking chair, two straight-backed chairs, a large table, a sink and stove, there was no furniture. (39)

Morrison clearly wants this house to reside on Darling Street, named for its positive connotation, since Pilate will become one of the most important persons in Milkman's

life and perhaps also named ironically for Milkman and Hagar's relationship. But even more than these associations, Morrison wants this house on Darling Street to function as a foil to the house of Pilate's brother Macon Dead on Not Doctor Street. That house had belonged to Dr. Foster, Macon's wife's father, the only African-American doctor in town, and its size, decorations, etc. reflected Dr. Foster's status. However, it is a Dead house; it has become a place of coldness, a place that lacks laughter and love. Early in chapter one after Morrison introduces Macon Dead Jr. and reveals his negative character traits several times, she has him walk one night to Pilate's house, a place he never visited. He stood at a window listening to Pilate sing, watching the movement of the three women. "As Macon felt himself softening under the weight of memory and music, the song died down. The air was quiet and yet Macon Dead could not leave" (30). Macon had forbidden Milkman to go to Pilate's house, but when Guitar took him there, Milkman, too, feels the comfort of the house on Darling Street.

> He was sitting comfortably in the notorious wine house; he was surrounded by women who seemed to enjoy him and who laughed out loud. And he was in love. No wonder his father was afraid of them. (47)

Pilate was one who could fly without leaving the ground and even the name of the street she lives on and the house she lives in reflect her personality.

Dead, First Corinthians -- daughter of Ruth Foster Dead and Macon Dead, Jr., sister to Magdalene called Lena and Milkman, Porter's lover. First Corinthians went to college to prepare for the role of wife and mother, but if not that, then for "alternative roles: teacher, librarian, or . . . well, something intelligent and public-spirited" (189). Instead of marrying or fulfilling the expected roles for which she was educated, First Corinthians and her sister Lena pass the years making artificial red roses to sell at the local department store. Although her sister is resigned to her life, when Corinthians turns forty-two she suffers a period of depression until she realizes that she must get out of the Dead house and the Dead life that her name holds. She applies for a job as maid to Michael-Mary Graham, the State Poet Laureate who "was so charmed by the sound of 'Corinthian Dead,' she hired her on the spot" (193). Corinthians hides her maid's position from her mother, telling Ruth instead that she works as the Poet Laureate's amanuensis. Her job takes her one step away from the Dead person that she has become; the second step comes when she finally admits that she loves Henry Porter, a poor yard worker that she meets on the bus (see Porter, Henry). Corinthians almost reenters the world of the Dead when she angrily leaves Porter in the car after an argument and walks toward her parents' home where she still lives. But she runs back to the car because "the moment she had put her

foot on the step leading up to the porch, she saw her ripeness mellowing and rotting before a heap of red velvet scraps on a round oak table" (198). She chooses love and life with a poor, socially unsuitable man over an emotionally and spiritually dead life on Not Doctor Street. In this action, she rejects the misnaming of her grandfather Macon Dead. First Corinthians' name comes from the naming ritual of "the blind selection of names from the Bible for every child other than the first male" (18), a ritual that named her mother, her aunt Pilate, her cousins Hagar and Reba, and her sister Magdalene. In the Bible, First Corinthians is "the First [l]etter of Paul to the Corinthians, one of two canonical Letters addressed to Corinth" (Harper's Bible Dictionary). The Christians in Corinth were primarily Gentile but some were also from a Jewish background; "and while they belonged primarily to the lower socioeconomic class (1 Cor. 1:26), it is clear that some were persons of higher social and economic standing" (Harper's Bible Dictionary). In his summary at the end of the book, Paul cites "a creedal statement about Christ's saving death and the power of his resurrection" (Harper's Bible Dictionary). Morrison's First Corinthians passes herself as an amanuensis, "one employed to take dictation or to copy manuscript" (The American Heritage Dictionary), which suggests the Pauline letter for which she is named. The Corinthians to whom the letter is addressed are of two

different socio-economics classes, just as Corinthians and Porter are. Corinthians' inner life mirrors her Dead name, but she is saved by love, just as the Corinthians were saved by Christ's love. Unlike Corinthians' parents, Morrison did not blindly name her character. Morrison has said that in this novel:

> 'I used the biblical names to show the impact of the Bible on the lives of Black people, their awe and respect for it coupled with their ability to distort it for their own purposes', (qtd. in Wilentz 90)

Any distorting comes from the movement from Paul's emphasis on the spiritual love of man for God to Morrison's emphasis on the love of woman for man.

Dead, Hagar -- Reba's daughter, Pilate's granddaughter, Milkman's cousin and lover. Even though Hagar is a relative, Milkman does not meet her until he is twelve and she is seventeen; to him she was "as pretty a girl as he'd ever seen" (44). They eventually begin an affair that lasts twelve years, until he is thirty-one. He then tires of Hagar and unable to think of an appropriate Christmas gift for her, writes a note, includes some money, thanks her for all she has meant to him, and closes with "I am signing this letter with love, of course, but more than that with gratitude" (99). After she receives the letter, each month Hagar finds a weapon and searches for "the man for whom she

believed she had been born into the world" (127). However, she was "the world's most inept killer" (129) and after her last failure, retreats to her bed. Pilate and Reba can do nothing to interest her in living. However, when she sees herself in a mirror, she seems to come awake, thinking that Milkman does not love her anymore because of her appearance. She spends an entire day shopping, buying every popular brand item of cosmetics and clothes she can find, only to have all the bags rip and tear when she is caught in a storm and the rain ruins all her new purchases. Unaware of how she looks, Hagar goes home, puts her new clothes on and stands before Reba and Pilot. Their expressions mirror the reality of her appearance, and she cries until the fever comes. In her bed, she tells Pilate that she never could understand "why he never liked my hair" but instead liked "silky hair," "penny-colored hair," "lemon-colored skin," and "gray-blue eyes" (319). Hagar dies. Like the other women in her family, Hagar obviously received her name through the Bible naming ritual (see First Corinthians). The biblical Hagar was given to Abraham as a concubine by his wife Sarah because Sarah could not bear any children; Ishmael was born from this relationship. There are two stories in Genesis that relate to Hagar. In one Sarah is so harsh to her that Hagar flees to the Wilderness of Shur; in the other she is "sent away with some bread and water and her child" (Harper's Bible Dictionary). Exile is the common

thread in both; the biblical Hagar is cast out just as Milkman casts Hagar out of his life with hardly a backward glance. Hagar's dying lament that Milkman cares more for a lighter skinned woman than she, a woman she attempts to emulate in her shopping spree, links Hagar with other Morrison characters who have succumbed to the lure of the dominant culture's view of women -- Pecola and Pauline in The Bluest Eye and Jadine in Tar Baby. Hagar has a biblical namesake, but she also has a parallel in legend with Ryna, who goes mad when the African Solomon flew away, leaving her and her children. Susan Byrd tells Milkman that in the legend, when Solomon left, Ryna "'screamed and screamed, lost her mind completely. You don't hear about women like that anymore . . . the kind of woman who couldn't live without a particular man'" (327). Hagar was probably dying as Susan explained this. If Hagar goes by a surname, she probably uses her grandmother's. Morrison would want her to carry the Dead name because Hagar, in her obsession with Milkman and with turning into a light skinned woman for him, never flies as Pilate does (without leaving the ground) or as Milkman will attempt to do. In the Ryna connection, as she has done before, Morrison uses the Bible for an easily recognizable allusion but for deeper characterization moves to folklore. Ruth Rosenberg writes that after noting all the biblical names in this novel, a reader might expect a Biblical allegory. However, Morrison

> joyously subverts that expectation, gaily frustrating all searches for her onoma [names] in Biblical concordances. In doing this, she is making a comment on the Black use of the white Book. By stressing the self-referentiality of her names, she protects the integrity of her fiction. It can only be explicated on its own terms, not on ours. (216)

Dead, Macon -- husband to Sing, father to Macon and Pilate, son of the flying African Solomon and Ryna. Macon's story is revealed bit by bit by Pilate, Macon Jr., Susan Byrd and the Song of Solomon the children sing because Macon (Jake) is dead when the novel begins. Jake, his birth name, was born in Virginia, one of the sons of Solomon and Ryna. When his father decides to fly, literally, back to Africa, he has Jake in his arms but drops him. Jake is then reared by Heddy, a Native American woman; Jake and Heddy's daughter Sing leave Virginia headed for Boston, but because Jake cannot read, they take a wrong turn and finally settle in Danville, Pennsylvania. When Jake registered with the Freedmen's Bureau, a drunken Yankee soldier filled out his papers. Because of his condition, the soldier misunderstood Jake's answers to his questions about birthplace, name, and father's name. As Macon, Jr. explains to Milkman:

> He asked Papa where he was born. Papa said Macon. Then he asked him who his father was. Papa said, 'He's dead.' Asked him who owned him, Papa said, 'I'm free.' Well, the Yankee wrote it all down, but in the wrong spaces. Had him born in Dunfrie, wherever the hell that is, and in the space for his name the fool wrote, 'Dead' comma 'Macon.' (53)

Because Jake was illiterate, he had no idea that he had been renamed until Sing read his papers, and the new name did not bother her. She "liked the name. Said it was new and would wipe out the past. Wipe it all out" (54). After Sing dies in childbirth, Macon and Macon Dead Jr. continue to farm Lincoln's Heaven until Macon is killed by the Butlers for his land. Macon's ghost appears several times to the children and later to Pilate alone; he tells her, "'Sing. Sing,' and later he leaned in at the window and said, 'You just can't fly on off and leave a body'" (148). She does not realize that he is calling his wife's name because he did not allow anyone to utter it after she died; nor does Pilate realize that he wanted her to bury his bones. Not knowing a name created a major miscommunication; Pilate never knew exactly what her father meant until just before her death. Macon Jr. told Milkman that "everything bad that ever happened to him [Macon] happened because he couldn't read. Got his name messed up because he couldn't read" (53). The fact that Jake got "his name messed up" created repercussions that lasted for generations since the Dead name truly describes most of his family because they have no sense of roots, of belonging. Jake

> erased more that the slavery experience--he obliterated his entire legacy, a goldmine that included a past rich in culture, history, and community, that extended beyond slavery to a rich African past. His action thus robbed his progeny of their legacy, relegating them to

> a life of materialism and inauthentic existence. (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 65)

Dead, Macon, Jr. -- husband to Ruth Foster Dead, father to First Corinthians, Magdalene called Lena, and Milkman, brother to Pilate. Macon Jr. is named according to the naming tradition of naming the first born son for the father.

> His own parents, in some mood of perverseness or resignation, had agreed to abide by a naming done to them by somebody who couldn't have cared less. Agreed to take and pass on to all their issue this heavy name scrawled in perfect thoughtlessness by a drunken Yankee in the Union Army. (18)

Not only is Macon Jr. not actually named for his father, since Macon Dead's name is Jake, but he also runs his business from an office with another man's name on the door.

> Scraping the previous owner's name off was hardly worth the trouble since he couldn't scrape it from anybody's mind. His storefront office was never called anything but Sonny's Shop, although nobody now could remember thirty years back, when, presumably, Sonny did something or other there. (17)

Not only does this reinforce Macon Jr's misnaming, Morrison probably names the shop Sonny's as an ironic twist since if there is one thing Macon Dead is not it is sunny. There is very little that can be said about Macon Jr. that is positive; "he was a difficult man to approach -- a hard man, with a manner so cool it discouraged casual or spontaneous conversation" (15). His unyielding attitude also extends to

his personal life. Macon hates his wife because of what he perceives as her incestuous relationship with her father, is disappointed in his daughters and is ashamed of his sister. But he was not always such a negative person. When he describes working with his father on Lincoln's Heaven and taking care of Pilate after his mother dies, he seems to be a different man, a man remembering an idyllic period of his life. However, this idyllic period ended when the white men killed his father for his land and after he thinks that Pilate has stolen the gold from the cave. With these two foundations of his life gone, one by death and the other, he thinks, by betrayal, Macon Dead turns to things rather than people for meaning and is then spiritually a Dead man. His philosophy, which he attempts to pass on to his son, is that

> 'the one important thing you'll ever need to know: Own things. And let the things you own own other things. Then you'll own yourself and other people too.' (55)

Lucinda H. Mackethan believes that "in accepting his name [Macon] is actually accepting the idea that the white man can determine his values and control his life" (201). When Jake is mistakenly renamed Macon Dead, the name functions more as prophecy for him than as a label. His grandson Macon Dead III will shed the Dead name as he discovers the rich heritage that his grandfather blotted out in his renaming. But there is little if any redemption for Macon Dead, Jr.; of all the Deads, he most clearly personifies the

name. Unlike his father Jake and his son Milkman, he is the only male that has no second name, no nickname. He is always Dead; the only place he is alive is in his memories and in his greed.

Dead, Macon III -- the protagonist of the novel; son to Macon Dead, Jr. and Ruth Foster Dead; brother to First Corinthians and Magdalene called Lena; nephew to Pilate and lover to Hagar. Macon Dead III is renamed by Freddie, the town gossip, who sees Ruth nursing the boy when he is well passed the weaning stage. "'A milkman. That's what you got here, Miss Rufie. A natural milkman if ever I seen one'" (14). Milkman is an isolated young man. There's little love in his home, and he is set apart from the other children because of his father's money and position. It is only when Guitar becomes his friend (see Bains, Guitar) that he even likes his nickname. "He had always hated that name [Macon Dead], all of it, and until he and Guitar became friends, he had hated his nickname too. But in Guitar's mouth it sounded clever, grown up" (38). As a boy, Milkman is spoiled by his mother and sisters. As a young man, he has a twelve year affair with Hagar while he works for his father; he discards her as easily as he discards a used piece of paper. As a man of thirty-two, he wants "'to be on my own. Get a job on my own, live on my own'" (163 - 164). To achieve this goal, he heads to Pennsylvania in search of

the gold that his father feels is still in the cave where Macon and Pilate hid as children after their father's death. At this point in his life, like his father, he is metaphorically Dead, especially in terms of his inner life. The search for the gold, however, ultimately becomes Milkman's quest for his name, for his identity. When he stops in Danville, Pennsylvania, Rev. Cooper, who knew his father as a child, tells him, "'I know your people'" (231). Milkman had heard that phrase many times before, "but he hadn't know what it meant: links" (231). As his search for the gold continues (see Circe), he discovers more links -- that his grandfather's name was Jake and his grandmother was Sing. When there is no gold in the cave, he decides to trace Pilate's early trip to Shalimar, Virginia; "he wanted the gold because it was gold and he wanted to own it. Free" (260). In Shalimar he gets into a fight when the men there are insulted because Milkman "hadn't bothered to say his name nor ask theirs, had called them 'them'. . . . " Even though his skin was as black as theirs, "they knew he had the heart of the white men who came to pick them up in the trucks when they needed anonymous, faceless laborers" (269). The archetypal quest involves departure, confrontation/ revelation, and return. Milkman has left home and is faced with confrontation in this fight; it becomes a part of his rite of passage. Revelation begins when the men of Shalimar

take Milkman on a hunt. When he is separated from the others, Milkman sits on the ground.

> Down either side of his thighs he felt the sweet gum's surface roots cradling him like the rough but maternal hands of a grandfather. Feeling both tense and relaxed, he sank his fingers into the grass (282),

which allows him to sense someone's approach and gives him enough time to save himself from being garroted. After the confrontations at Solomon's General Store and in the woods, Milkman's past is slowly revealed to him in the song the children of Shalimar sing. By now the gold has been forgotten as Milkman's discovery of his heritage consumes him. Rushing back to Susan's, he learns enough details about his family that were in the children's song so that added to what he had learned from Circe, Milkman then possesses the full story of his past, and he becomes a different man. He had been Macon Dead III, the recipient of a misnaming from two generations before; because he knows that he should inherit the name always handed down to sons, he becomes Solomon. In keeping with this rebirth, Morrison baptizes Milkman when he returns to Sweet (see Sweet). "'I want to swim!' he shouted. 'Come on, let's go swimming. I'm dirty and I want waaaaater!'" (330). On his return home, the final part of the quest, to tell Pilate all that he has learned, Milkman, who now knows the truth and can lift the Dead name from his family, realizes that "When you

know your name, you should hang on to it, for unless it is noted down and remembered, it will die when you do" (333). The name of Solomon, the Flying African, survived in the children's Song of Solomon and did not die. As Pilate lies dying in Milkman's arms, she asks him to sing to her; he sings of Sugarman (Solomon), the same song Pilate sang when he was born.

> When Milkman actually sings the song of Solomon, he assumes the name that had been denied the invisible man without which Milkman would be colorless and the land of his culture invisible to all. (Dixon 139)

Macon Dead III, Milkman, descendant of Solomon, attempts to fly after Pilate is killed, attempts to fly "for even now he knew what Shalimar knew: If you surrendered to the air, you could *ride* it" (341). When critics discuss Milkman, they invariably address the question of the discovery of his identity. However, they also draw attention to the first renaming, Milkman. Jacqueline De Weever draws attention to the fairy tale Rumpelstiltskin allusion in Ruth's prolonged nursing of her son:

> The naming of the hero is linked to the tale where the happy ending depends on knowledge of the secret name. Milkman, like Macon Dead, is not a real name and the hero of this novel embarks on a journey of discovery to learn the real name of his ancestors and thus repossess his own soul. (134-135)

Genevieve Fabre explains that "Milkman's name itself is a joke, but it is also his fate. The child who was breast-fed

too long is doomed to become the subject of other people's fantasies . . ." (109). Keith E. Byerman notes that

> Milkman flies into history and responsibility rather than out of it. And in the process he creates the meaning for his own name. From being the one who sucks nourishment and life from others, he comes the provider, giving Jake his name and home. (75 -76)

Ruth Rosenberg writes that "in African tradition, one is not considered a person until one has been named" (220). For Rosenberg, discovering Solomon's name

> completes his birth. That his name comes from his great-grandfather also conforms to African tradition, because 'the name is first whispered into the newborn's ear by an elderly person who is going to where the neonate just came from.' (221)

Byerman also connects the new name to Milkman's awareness of his African heritage:

> Naming here has association with African cultures in which the name is the expression of the soul; because of this, the choosing and keeping of the name is a major ritual. To lose the name or, in Afro-American terms, to be 'called out of one's name' is an offense against the spirit. (70)

One critic relates Milkman's discovery "to what Joseph Campbell calls 'the unquenched source through which society is reborn'" (qtd in Awkward 492).

Dead, Magdalene called Lena -- daughter of Macon Dead Jr. and Ruth Foster Dead, sister to First Corinthians and

Milkman. Magdalene is usually mentioned in connection with her sister as the maker of the artificial red roses. There are only two brief episodes in which she is individualized. In chapter two, when the family goes on its Sunday afternoon drive in the Packard, it is Magdalene who must take the young Milkman into the woods to urinate. She goes off to pick wildflowers, returns, and when she steps behind him, "he's turned around before he was through" (35). "'He wet on me,' she said. 'He wet me, Mama.' She was close to tears" (35). In the second episode, which dramatically ends Part I, the adult Magdalene physically and verbally attacks her brother, venting years of rage and frustration. She tells him after she slaps him, "'As surely as my name is Magdalene, you are the line I will step across. . . . But I forgot that there are all kinds of ways to pee on people'" (215). Magdalene, like her father, is Dead for most of the novel. Except for these two episodes, she blends into the background of the family which probably accounts for the diminutive Lena which is often attached to her name. Unlike her brother and sister, she never breaks away from the Dead family even though the second episode certainly demonstrates an ability to do so. It is obvious that her name, derived from Mary Magdalene, is a result of the Bible naming ritual. The fact that only part of the biblical name is used is further evidence of the diminishing of her character. Mary Magdalene "seems to have been the leader of a group of women

who 'followed' and 'served' Jesus constantly . . . "; "she is foremost as a witness to Jesus' death . . . " (Harper's Bible Dictionary). These are also the roles that Magdalene Dead plays for Milkman. She, her sister and her mother 'serve' him, and with her final speech in Part I, Morrison has her present at the 'death' of Milkman; he will be resurrected in Part II. Jacqueline De Weever, in pointing out that the women's names in the novel "emphasize the irony of their situation," notes that unlike her biblical namesake, "Magdalena [sic] called Lena is not a reformed prostitute; she never takes a lover and remains in her father's house" (132). Morrison again uses the Bible to suggest a character but not to fully inform it.

Dead, Pilate -- daughter of Macon Dead (Jake) and Sing, sister to Macon Dead Jr., mother to Reba and grandmother to Hagar, aunt to Milkman and his sisters. Pilate has a remarkable birth; she is born after her mother dies. Her father, Macon Dead,

> confused and melancholy over his wife's death in childbirth, had thumbed through the Bible, and since he could not read a word, chose a group of letters that seemed to him strong and handsome; saw in them a large figure that looked like a tree hanging in some princely but protective way over a row of smaller trees.

He copied the name on a piece of paper, "as illiterate people do, every curlicue, arch, and bend in the letter, and

presented it to the midwife" (18). Circe, the midwife, pronounced the name for him, which he thought referred to "a riverboat pilot", and tried to dissuade him from giving "this motherless child the name of the man that killed Jesus . . . " (19). He stood his ground and placed the piece of paper with Pilate's name on it in the family Bible. Twelve years later, after Pilate's father is dead, Circe has a little snuff box, that Sing owned, made into an earring for Pilate. The young girl places the piece of paper that bears her name in the box and wears that earring until the day she dies. Pilate is named for Pontius Pilate, the ruler who turned Christ over to the mob in Jerusalem to be crucified. There's no parallel between her life and her namesake's. When her father chose her name, it was because it resembled a tree, one that would protect smaller ones. His reason for the naming acts as a prophecy of the woman she would become. She helps her sister-in-law Ruth conceive and keep Milkman; she provides as easy a life as she can for her daughter Reba and granddaughter Reba; she acts as guide for Milkman even though he does not realize this until it is almost too late. For him, "her role as guide and educator--as *pilot*, as her name suggests --is that of *griot*: She is guardian of cultural and familial lore" (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 64). Wilfred D. Samuels and Clenora Hudson-Weems view the tree connection to the biblical Pilate as "another instance of Morrison's more positive use of biblical referents"; they

contend that Morrison's use of "biblical mythology" "enriches the text" . . . (63). Genevieve Fabre argues that even though she is named for Pontius Pilate, that Pilate "is nevertheless the one who knows that the sanctity and magic of names is not to be disregarded. Her name is her sole legacy and must be saved from oblivion" since it is the only word her father ever wrote. "Pilate's unusual name therefore becomes appropriate for this woman who had an unusual childbirth . . . " (110). Barbara Hill Rigney mentions the biblical background of the name, "Pilate's ambiguous name (inherently subversive in its anti-Christian intimations)" but is more concerned with the earring Pilate wore. The wearing is important

> because the name itself is a connection with family, with tradition and history. . . . Pilate carries her name with her . . . to provide continuity in an otherwise random and dispossessed existence. (42)

Dead, Reba -- Pilate's daughter and Hagar's mother. Reba is a lucky woman. She tells Guitar and Milkman that

> people come from everywhere to get me to stand in for'em at drawings and give them numbers to play . . . I win everything I try to win and lots of things I don't even try to win. (45)

Of the three women who live in the house on Darling Street, "only Reba, with her light pimply skin and deferential manner, looked as though her simplicity might also be vacuousness" (46). She does not have the strength of her

mother or the obsessive streak of her daughter. Of the three women, only Reba's name is a diminutive, perhaps emphasizing her position within the trio. Her position to her mother and her daughter parallels Hannah's relationship to Eva and Sula. In fact, Hagar calls Pilate "mama" and calls her mother "Reba." Reba's only two characteristics seem to be her luck and her easy way with men, but neither is an unqualified guarantee. Reba was born when Pilate was working on the island off the coast of Virginia. Because there was no Bible available for the naming ritual her family practiced, she asked the women for some suggestions from the Bible; they "reeled off a score, from which she chose Rebecca and shortened it to Reba" (148). In the Bible, Rebekah is the wife of Issac and the mother to the twins Jacob and Essau who quarreled and formed two separate nations. Jacob was always her favorite, and Rebekah did whatever she could to further his fortunes since he was not the first born (Harper's Bible Dictionary). In her contention that in the novel "the women's names emphasize the irony of their situations," Jacqueline De Weever notes that "Rebecca, instead of being the exemplary wife, never marries and has one lover after another" (132). Reba probably used her mother's surname since Pilate did not marry Reba's father.

Dead, Ruth Foster -- daughter of Dr. Foster, wife of Macon, mother to First Corinthians, Magdalene called Lena, and Milkman. She adored her widowed father, perhaps too much; for him, "her steady beam of love was unsettling" and when at sixteen she still expected her goodnight kiss, he was disturbed by "the ecstasy that always seemed to be shining in Ruth's face when he bent to kiss her--an ecstasy he felt inappropriate to the occasion" (23). When her father dies after she and Macon are married, Macon finds Ruth in her dead father's room and from his perspective, she was "'naked as a yard dog, kissing him. Him dead and white and puffy and skinny, and she had his fingers in her mouth'" (73). From that point on, he never touched his wife except under the spell of Pilate's charm which resulted in Milkman's birth. To make up for the lack of love in her life, Ruth has the water mark on her father's dining room table as a reminder of him, but "something else is needed to get from sunup to sundown: a balm, a gentle touch or nuzzling of some sort" (13). For that reason, she nurses her son past the age when he should have been weaned. However, she had to give up that pleasure when Freddie discovered her nursing Milkman and spread the news all over town. With her father dead, her husband alienated, and her one remaining pleasure gone, Ruth visits her father's grave late at night on a regular basis because even though her father was arrogant, foolish and destructive, "he cared whether and he cared how

I lived . . . " (124) which now no one in her family does. The biblical Ruth, which ironically in Hebrew probably means 'satiation', marries Maholon. After he dies, "widowed and childless, she abandoned her family, country, and faith to accompany her mother-in-law Naomi to Bethlehem." For her support of Naomi, "the women of Bethlehem exalted Ruth as the loving daughter-in-law who meant more to Naomi than seven sons, the ideal number" (Harper's Bible Dictionary). "All three names --Ruth, Foster, and Dead-- suggest dependence and absence." Instead of being loyal to a mother-in-law, however, "Ruth is devoted and loyal to the point of forfeiting all rights to her personal life" in her relationship with her father. "In life, she is 'fostered' or nurtured by this relationship, and it robs her of a self that results in meaningful, personal development. In short, it leaves her 'dead' though alive" (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 55). Gerry Brenner describes Ruth Dead as "little more than a weak replica of her biblical namesake, exemplar of dutiful, self-abnegating obedience, certainly no candidate for praise" (120).

Foster, Dr. _____ -- Ruth's father, Macon's father-in-law, grandfather to First Corinthians, Magdalene, and Milkman. He was "the only colored doctor" (3) and "the most important Negro in the city" (22). Concerned about his daugther's need for his physical attention, he agrees to

Macon and Ruth's marriage even though Macon is not from the same socio-economic level. Gerry Brenner believes that Morrison

> shrewdly . . . mocks the novel's men . . . . She finds little value in Ruth's father Dr. Foster, the image-proud black professional. Despite his stature . . ., he does little to better the plight of his fellow blacks, regarding himself as having risen above them. (117)

There is little to argue with in Brenner's assessment; Dr. Foster does little to "foster" his people, his community in the sense of "to bring up; nurture; to promote the development or growth of; encourage; to nurse; cherish" (The American Heritage Dictionary). Dr. Foster is not the complete villain that Brenner depicts, however. Regardless of his perception of his daughter's unnatural feelings for him, he does foster in her a kind of love that on her own terms sustains her when her husband rejects her and when her family, except for Milkman, is unable to fill the void.

Jake -- see Dead, Macon.

Lincoln's Heaven -- the hundred and fifty acre farm that Macon Dead (Jake) owned and that he and his son Macon Jr. worked in Danville, Pennsylvania. Macon Jr. describes the land in idyllic terms:

> we had a pond that was four acres. And a stream, full of fish. Right down in the heart of a valley. Prettiest mountain you ever saw, Montour Ridge. . . . And all around in the mountains was deer and wild turkey. (51)

Macon named his farm animals for the historical figures he heard about: the mare President Lincoln, her foal Mary Todd, the cow Ulysses S. Grant, and the hog Robert E. Lee. Macon farmed the land for sixteen years, and for him and his family in that time, it was heaven. However, the powerful white Butler family wanted the land, tricked the illiterate Macon into making his mark on papers he could not read, and killed him for the land. For Macon Dead, the heaven that President Lincoln seemed to promise with the Emancipation Proclamation existed for only a short period of time, perhaps suggesting any short-lived hopes the former slaves of America held for complete freedom with the Proclamation and the end of the Civil War.

Milkman -- see Dead, Macon, Jr.

No Mercy Hospital -- the name given to Mercy Hospital, located in the white, northern section of town, by the African-American citizens of Southside because it was 1931 before "the first colored expectant mother was allowed to give birth inside its wards and not on its steps" (4). The name demonstrates not only the attitude of the town toward

its African-American citizens but also those citizens' awareness of the it. A situation which demonstrates this attitude and awareness involved Guitar, his grandmother, and a white nurse. The attitude is evident in the nurse's words as she approaches Mrs. Bains, Guitar's grandmother, who is part of the crowd watching Robert Smith poised on top of Mercy Hospital, "'You,' she said, moving toward the stout woman. 'Are these your children?'" The awareness is evident in Mrs. Bains' response

> the stout woman turned her head slowly, her eyebrows lifted at the carelessness of the address. Then, seeing where the voice came from, she lowered her brows and veiled her eyes. (6)

No Mercy would appear to be aptly named.

Not Doctor Street -- name given to Mains Avenue by the African-American citizens in the Southside of town.

> . . . the only colored doctor in the city had lived and died on that street [Mains Avenue], and when he moved there in 1896 his patients took to calling the street, which none of them lived in or near, Doctor Street. (34)

However, other African Americans did move there, and when they received letters addressed to Doctor Street, the post office did not acknowledge that such a street existed. When the men from Southside were drafted in World War I, Doctor Street was the address they gave at the recruitment office;

"in that way, the name acquired a quasi-official status" (4). This disturbed the white city officials and soon posters went up all over the Southside explaining that that particular street "had always been and would always be Mains Avenue and not Doctor Street"; "it was a genuinely clarifying public notice because it gave Southside residents a way to keep their memories alive and please the city legislators as well" (4). Unwittingly, the officials sanctioned the naming of the street themselves in their attempt to stamp out any recognition of African-American power. Theodore O. Mason, Jr. explains that

> the black residents of Southside exercise control over their environment by reserving the capacity to name it, to assign it a value, and to indicate its quality. Authentic social practice is at the root of this particular naming process. (175)

Morrison presents this misnaming on the first pages of the novel, just as she did with the misnaming of the Bottom in Sula. In this way, she immediately draws attention to naming, which is a major part of this novel, and attention to misnaming, which she also practices repeatedly in the novel with the biblical names.

> Black life in this universe is characterized by an inversion of some of the conditions of white life. To survive, one must apparently play by the rules established by white economic and political power yet invert their meaning to subvert their strength and dominance. (Mason 175)

Porter, Henry -- a member of the Seven Days and First Corinthians' lover. In chapter one Porter, drunk, stands in the window of his rented room with a shotgun, and shouts, "'I want to fuck! Send me up somebody to fuck! Hear me? Send me up somebody, I tell ya, or I'ma blow my brains out!'" (25). When he is too clumsy and cannot turn his shotgun on himself, he "pulled out his penis and in a high arc, peed over the heads of the women" (26). Then Porter's shouts turn into "great shoulder-heaving sobs" (26) and with tears running down his face, he prays for hate not love. "'I can't take no more love, Lord. I can't carry it. Just like Mr. Smith. He couldn't carry it'" (26). Porter is referring to Robert Smith who jumped from the top of Mercy Hospital. At this point in the novel the reader is unaware that both men are members in the Seven Days (see Seven Days). Porter is obviously reacting to the burden that membership carries. He is not mentioned again until he courts First Corinthians, whom he meets on the bus as she rides to her maid's job. She takes little notice of him, "only that he was ill-dressed and appeared elderly" (193). However, their relationship (see First Corinthians) progresses to the point that Porter is the one who brings love into Corinthians' Dead life. Because he is a poor man, he offers her only himself instead of "roses," "silk underwear and bottles of perfume," "chocolate creams in a heart-shaped box. Instead of a big house and a great big

car" (201). Even though Macon Dead attempts to destroy their happiness, Corinthians eventually moves in with Porter. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a porter as

> one who has charge of a door or gate, especially at the entrance of a fortified town or of a castle or other large buildings . . . a gate-keeper, door keeper; a person whose employment is to carry burdens.

Macon Dead could be said to be a porter of a "fortified castle" in terms of protecting his home and family from someone like Porter, but Macon as porter is overcome by a porter who brings loves. Henry Porter does personify his name when he "carries burdens"; he carries the burden of membership in the Seven Days and carries the burden of liberating Corinthians from her Dead life.

Railroad Tommy -- he and Hospital Tommy own a barbershop in Southside. Guitar and Milkman seek refuge there when Feather refuses to sell them a beer because Milkman is Macon Dead, Jr.'s son. In the role of advisor, Railroad Tommy lists a number of things the two boys will never possess, a list primarily made up of luxuries that only whites have. Railroad Tommy's prior occupation is alluded to when he answers Guitar with, "'Yeah, well, welcome aboard'" (61). Both Tommys, Hospital and Railroad, carry the nicknames of their previous employment. Such nicknames are plentiful in this novel and outnumber the nicknames in the other five

Morrison novels. Names and identity are the focus of Song of Solomon so the number of nicknames is not surprising, but these names are not just diminutives of Christian names. Instead, they reflect the lives that these men lead. As Milkman heads home from Virginia, anxious to share the news of their shared heritage with Pilate, he thought of all the African-American men that he knew from home and the ones he had met on his journey. "Their names. Names they got from yearnings, gestures, flaws, events, mistakes, weaknesses. Names that bore witness." He remembers:

> . . . Guitar, Railroad Tommy, Hospital Tommy, Empire State (he just stood around and swayed), Small Boy, Moon, Humpty-Dumpty, Blue Boy, Scandinavia, Quack Quack, Jericho, Spoonbread, Ice Man, Dough Belly, Rocky River, Gray Eye, Cock-a-Doodle-Doo, Cool Breeze, Muddy Waters, Pinetop, Jelly Roll, Fats, Lead-belly, Bo Diddley, Cat-Iron, Peg-Leg, Son, Shortstuff, Smoky Babe, Funny Papa, Bukka, Pink, Bull Moose, B.B., T-Bone, Black Ace, Lemon, Washboard, Gatemouth, Cleanhead, Tampa Red, Juke Boy, Shine, Staggerlee, Jim the Devil, Fuck-up, and *Dat* Nigger. (333-34)

Ryna's Gulch -- Ryna is the woman Solomon the flying African left behind when he flew home to Africa. Milkman first hears the sounds from the Gulch when he is on the hunt, not realizing the full impact of the story behind the hunter's explanation that "'folks say a woman name Ryna is crying in there. That's how it got the name'" (277). Later, Susan Byrd explains to Milkman that Ryna's Gulch is a ravine where

> 'sometimes you can hear this funny sound by it that the wind makes. People say it's the wife, Solomon's wife

> crying. . . . They say she screamed and screamed, lost her mind completely. You don't hear about women like that anymore. . . the kind of woman who couldn't live without a particular man.' (326-327)

Milkman still does not realize Ryna's relationship to him, does not realize that while he is in Virginia that Hagar is dying of her love for him just as Ryna died for Solomon. When Susan tells the story of Solomon and Ryna, she dismisses it as "some old folks' lie" (326), but the naming of the gulch and Solomon's Leap reflect the importance of folklore to Morrison's work.

Seven Days, the -- the secret organization to which Guitar, Porter, Empire State, Railroad Tommy, Hospital Tommy, and Nero belong; Robert Smith was a member when he tried to fly from the hospital's roof. After

> a Negro child, Negro woman, or Negro man is killed by whites and nothing is done about it by *their* law and *their* courts, this society selects a similar victim at random, and they execute him or her in a similar manner if they can. (155)

Milkman first learns about this society when he begins to notice changes in Guitar, when he notices that the men in the barbershop know much more about certain crimes than they could have learned from the newspapers. Guitar explains to him that in the organization each man is named for a day of the week; he is the Sunday man. Milkman is surprised at what he is hearing and asks Guitar why they kill innocent

people. His response is that "'there are no innocent white people, because every one of them is a potential nigger-killer, if not an actual one'" (156); to Guitar, "'white people are unnatural'" (157). He justifies what he does by telling Milkman that "'how I die or when doesn't interest me. What I die for does. It's the same as what I live for.'" He explains that the Seven Days is about love; "'what I'm doing ain't about hating white people. It's about loving us. About loving you. My whole life is love'" (160). In Morrison's first two novels, the negative effect of the white culture on the African-American characters has always permeated the text but not to the degree that it does in Song of Solomon. Morrison opens the novel with the white establishment attempting to oppress the naming of Mains Avenue (see Not Doctor Street). Then throughout the novel, the reader encounters several characters' versions of the killing of Macon Dead by the white men who wanted his land. Circe is vehement in her desire that the dogs destroy the Butler home because the last Butler family member killed herself rather than work as hard as Circe always had. Then the Seven Days' activities surface. The naming of the organization has an obvious connection to the seven days of biblical creation; perhaps Morrison ironically creates the Seven Days of destruction. However, the destruction is not always to the whites whom the Days view as their enemy. Ruth Rosenberg argues that "masked behind the anonymity of

their assumed names is a hatred so consuming that it enslaves them to a fate far worse than that suffered by their slave ancestors" (219).

Shalimar -- "town" in Virginia where Milkman discovers the truth of his ancestry, discovers his identity. Milkman heads to Shalimar, Virginia from Pennsylvania in his attempt to trace Pilate's journey as a young woman; he hopes to find the gold that he and his father think she had at that time. Shalimar is so small that he would have missed it had his fan belt not broken in front of Solomon's General Store, which basically comprises Shalimar. In its size and its function as the site of Milkman's rite of passage through help from Shalimar's elders, Shalimar is more village than town. In fact, it is so small that

> there must be a lot of intermarriage in this place, [Milkman] thought. All the women looked alike and except for some light skinned red-headed men (like Mr. Solomon), the men looked very much like the women. Visitors to Shalimar must be rare, and new blood that settled here nonexistent. (266)

The names Solomon and Shalimar are intertwined in this village. After he is there a few days, Milkman realizes that

> everybody in this town is named Solomon . . . . Solomon's General Store, Luther Solomon (no relation), Solomon's Leap, and now the children were singing '*Solomon* don't leave me' instead of '*Sugarman.*' Even the name of the town sounded like Solomon: Shalimar,

> which Mr. Solomon and everybody else pronounced *Shalleemone*. (305)

Susan Byrd tells Milkman that his grandfather was "'one of Solomon's children. Or Shalimar. Papa said Heddy always called him Shalimar'" (325). And even though the title of the novel is Song of Solomon, when Milkman prepares to emulate the flight of Solomon, the Flying African, Morrison unexpectedly leaves the reader with the name Shalimar instead of Solomon. In the closing sentence, she writes that Milkman "knew what Shalimar knew: If you surrendered to the air, you could *ride* it" (341). Morrison, by using the name Shalimar in such a dramatic ending, clearly draws attention to it. The African name "Sulaiman," pronounced phonetically ("soo-lah-ee-MAHN'), suggests Solomon, just as Shalimar does. Sulaiman, an Arabic name from North Africa, means "peaceful [cf Hebrew: Shelmon, Solomon]" (Chuks-orji 69). This name tenuously connects Solomon to Africa but does not explain Shalimar. However, there may be a connection. Shalem is an "alternative spelling for Salem, the Venus evening star in the Ugarit scripts" (Everyman's Dictionary of Non-Classical Mythology). Ugarit is an ancient Syrian city (American Heritage Dictionary), and in the Ugaritic mythology, El is the supreme god. One of his children was "Shalim,'Peace' or 'Twilight'" (Larousse World Mythology). The African name Sulaiman is connected to Solomon and to peace; Shalem is also connected to peace and

to twilight, creating a Solomon/Shalimar relationship. It is in Shalimar that Milkman learns that he is a descendant of the Flying African, Solomon. It is also in Shalimar that Milkman, Macon Dead III, finally sheds his incorrect Dead name and gains a sense of peace when he discovers his heritage and his identity. When Milkman returns home, he shares all that he has learned with Pilate and brings her to Shalimar to bury the bones of her father Jake, son of Solomon; "and on the second and last evening, Milkman and Pilate walked up the road to the path that led to Solomon's Leap." After they bury Macon's bones, Guitar, who is aiming at Milkman, accidentally shoots Pilate. She dies as "the twilight had thickened and all around them it was getting dark" (339). It is in this twilight following Pilate's death that Milkman prepares to jump from Solomon's Leap and evokes Shalimar's name. And just as Shalem is an evening star, when Milkman jumps, "as fleet and bright as a lodestar he wheeled toward Guitar and it did not matter which one of them would give up his ghost in the killing arms of his brother" (341). The peace Milkman has gained, the twilight of his leap of faith, and a star are embodied in Shalimar the Flying African. The name is in keeping with Morrison use of mythology as one of the varied sources for her naming.

Solomon -- the father of Jake (Macon Dead), grandfather to Macon Dead and Pilate, and great-grandfather to Milkman. In Virginia, Susan Byrd tells Milkman that the slave Solomon

> 'just stood up in the fields one day, ran up some hill, spun around a couple of times, and was lifted up in the air. Went right on back to wherever it was he came from. There's a big double-headed rock over the valley named for him.' (326)

However, Solomon's Leap is not only a place but also an action by a specific man; the two are so intertwined that it is difficult to talk about one without also discussing the other. Susan's story connects Milkman to his unknown ancestor, the man he is named for since Macon Dead is a misnaming. "The new name which crowns his individuation, Solomon, drives from a Canaanite deity meaning 'completion, fulfillment.' The signification 'wholeness' renders his newfound autonomy" (Rosenberg 224). Milkman's strong sense of identity with Solomom and the leap are obvious when he returns to Sweet and shouts in jubilation:

> 'Oh, man! He didn't need no airplane. He just took off; got fed up. *All the way up*! No more cotton! No more bales! No more orders! No more shit! He flew, baby. Lifted his beautiful black ass up in the sky and flew on home.' (332)

Morrison's naming of the novel and the Flying African for a biblical king is certainly in keeping with the naming rituals practiced by other characters in the work. Solomon

(Hebrew for 'Yahweh's beloved') was a king known for his "extensive building program" and

> the Old Testament makes much of his wisdom, describing his ability to determine which of two prostitutes was a disputed child's true mother . . ., to answer difficult questions posed by the queen of Sheba . . ., and to tell fables and sing songs. (Harper's Bible Dictionary)

"The literal historical interpretation of the Song [of Solomom] understands it as an exchange of love between a man and a woman" (Harper's). The details available about the Flying African deal more with the leap and its aftermath than with him as an individual, so there is no basis for judging his wisdom, his ability to answer difficult questions, or his ability to tell stories and sing songs. Instead, tales are told about him rather than by him just as the songs which the children and Pilate sing are about him. To flesh out the motivation of the character of the man who leaps and flies to Africa, however, Morrison turns once again to folklore. "Flying is wide-ranging topos in African American lore--in North America, in the Caribbean, and in Latin America--as a symbol of freedom . . . " (Jones 172). It is this freedom which the ancestral Solomom bequeaths to Milkman, bequeaths a place and an action. Standing on Solomon's Leap, after Guitar has killed Pilate

> without wiping away the tears, taking a deep breath, or even bending his knees--he leaped. As fleet and bright as a lodestar he wheeled toward Guitar and it did not matter which one of them would give up his ghost in the

> killing arms of his brother. For now he knew what Shalimar knew: If you surrendered to the air, you could *ride* it. (341)

Few of Morrison's characters' names appear to come from her personal life. However, her grandfather, a sharecropper who lost his land, was John Solomon Willis (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 2-3).

Smith, Robert -- man who stands atop the roof of Mercy Hospital on February 18, 1931 to carry out his plan of flying across Lake Superior. "Mr. Smith had seen the rose petals, heard the music, and leaped on into the air" (9). As an agent for North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance, the people in the neighborhood are familiar with Smith, "they kidded him, abused him, told their children to tell him they were out or sick or gone to Pittsburgh" (8). Smith is an easy-going man who does not draw attention to himself on the job, at church, or in his personal life. His neighbors and clients certainly would not have suspected, even if they knew about the Seven Days (see Seven Days), that he was a killer. However, his association with the Days is probably what killed him. When a drunken Porter (see Porter, Henry) stands in his window crying, he prays for hate, not love because "'I can't take no more love, Lord. I can't carry it. Just like Mr. Smith. He couldn't carry it. It's too heavy'" (26). Since Mr. Smith attempts flight in the

opening of the novel just as Milkman does in the final lines, the two characters are intertwined in the structure of the novel and in the theme of flight. By frequently alluding to Mr. Smith's flight, Morrison weaves a literal attempt at flight throughout the novel; the reader is not allowed to forget it, thereby making the Flying African's flight from Solomon's Leap more plausible and Milkman's believable. Most of the characters in this novel have memorable or at least arresting names -- Pilate, Hagar, Milkman, Guitar, Macon Dead, Circe, Sing -- names that suggest the Bible, mythology, or a Native American heritage. When Robert Smith's name is placed in this company, at first his name seems ordinary, mundane. Robert is Anglo-Saxon and ranks fifth in most used names; it means "fame-bright" (Stewart). Smith is from the English, Scots, and Irish, meaning "worker in metals" (Smith) and has been quite a popular name among African Americans (Barker 164). Smith is such a common name in America that it is often used to indicate lack of individuality. Ironically, in the company of so many names that have such varied backgrounds, Smith stands out, drawing attention to itself. Perhaps Smith becomes the African-American Everyman of the novel who, like the peacock Milkman and Guitar see, has too much baggage for flight.

Sweet -- the woman Milkman meets in Shalimar, Virginia. After the hunt, Omar suggests that Milkman take a rest and directs him to Sweet. Milkman goes to her house and later that night he "slipped into Sweet's bed and slept the night in her perfect arms" (301-302). The first time Milkman meets Sweet, whose "smile was just like her name" (288), he asks for a bath. That Milkman would allow a woman to bathe him is not surprising; in Part I his self-centeredness is obvious. However, this episode follows the hunt which served as a catalyst for his awakening, his rebirth. In this context, the bath can function as a purification. The fact that in turn he bathes Sweet is even more evidence that a new Milkman, one less self-absorbed, is emerging. When he returns from Susan Byrd and knows that he is a descendant of the Flying African, he goes with Sweet to the river, a traditional baptism site.

> And he began to whoop and dive and splash and turn. 'He could fly! You hear me? My great-granddaddy could fly! Goddam!' He whipped the water with his fists, then jumped straight up as though he too could take off . . . . (331-332)

Sweet functions as a priestess, a handmaiden to Milkman in the rites of renewal that Morrison suggests with his new name, his baptism. However, she also functions as a voice of conscience. Michael Awkward argues that like Susan Byrd, Sweet is "by and large, remarkably unimpressed by Soloman and his transcendent act" (495). After his swim, Milkman is

still ecstatic about Solomon's leap. Sweet asks him, "'Who'd he leave behind?'" and he answers "'Everybody! He left everybody down on the ground and he sailed off like a black eagle'" (332). Awkward notes that on Milkman's trip home, he realizes how deeply he has hurt Hagar; when he remembers Sweet's question, he also remembers the twenty-one children and the grieving, mad Ryna who were left behind when Solomon flew away.

> It is only at this point, when he learns of the painful consequences of the celebrated male act of flight, that Milkman's comprehension of his familial heritage and the song of Solomon can be said to move toward satisfying completion. (Awkward 496)

The consequences of male flight and the female's role in staying behind are implicit in Morrison's epithet to the novel, "The fathers may soar/And the children may know their names." Sweet has a role in Milkman's self-awareness, the result of his quest, and the positive connotations of her name suggest Morrison's approval for her only male protagonist's actions. The name is ironic, however, considering the negative role that sweets usually play in Morrison's work. In The Bluest Eye Pecola loves the Mary Jane candy with the picture of the pretty little white girl on the wrapper, an image that perpetuates Pecola's desire for blue eyes; her mother goes to the movies and copies the white stars' hairstyles. However, she abandons all concern with appearance when she breaks a tooth on a piece of candy.

In this novel, Guitar hates sweets because he associates them with the mill owner who gave him and his siblings divinity when their father was killed, thinking it would placate the family since he did not give them any money. Milkman "wasn't sure he trusted anybody who didn't like sweets" (61). He was right; it was a Sweet whom he could trust more than the childhood friend who would try to kill him.

CHAPTER V

TAR BABY

African Woman -- woman that Jade encounters in a Parisian food market. While shopping in the market, Jade and the other customers are fascinated by a tall, hippie, bosomy, African Woman with "skin like tar" dressed in a yellow dress (38).

> The woman walked down the aisle as though her many-colored sandals were pressing gold tracks on the floor. Two upsidedown V's were scored into each of her cheeks, her hair was wrapped in a gelee as yellow as her dress. (38)

The woman selected three eggs and when the cashier turned to tell her they were sold only by the dozen, "[the cashier] had to look up into those eyes too beautiful for lashes to say it" (38). Paying with a ten louis piece, the African Woman, "her right elbow [in] the palm of her left hand and [holding] the eggs aloft between earlobe and shoulder" (38), leaves the store. The mesmerized customers watch her walk away, "gold tracking the floor and leaving them all behind" (38), wondering what she will do with the eggs when she comes to the door. Of course, the automatic door opens for her

> but they had forgotten that or had taken it for granted so long they had not really seen it until that woman approached it with the confidence of transcendent beauty and it flew open in silent obedience. (38-39)

Everyone in the market gasps, "just a quick snatch of breath before that woman's woman--that mother/sister/she; that unphotographable beauty--took it all away" (39). This fascinating experience is marred for Jade when the African Woman, once outside, looks her directly in the eye through the window and spits on the sidewalk. Morrison does not give this character a name; it is natural for the reader to label her the African Woman because of her dress, her bearing and her facial markings. Lauren Lepow views her as "a tar baby to Jade: a dazzling temptation, but actually a trap, an illusion, not a valid object of desire or emulation" (374). Dorothy H. Lee notes that after this experience in the market, which carries "the mythic overtones that recur" in Morrison's work, Jade, "feeling lonely and inauthentic, . . . runs to the island in search of sanction and confirmation" (357). When one considers Therese's final condemnation of the light skinned, European educated, fashion model Jade, that "she has forgotten her ancient properties" (263), one would think that the African Woman is, contrary to Lepow's contention, just the figure that Morrison would want Jade to emulate. She is the "woman's woman", the "mother/sister/she" that Jade never becomes. Critics and readers easily identify the character

as African, and invariably, when Morrison turns to African culture for her characters, they tend to be positive ones. That she presents the African Woman so early in the novel would suggest that Morrison intends for the woman to be in the reader's mind throughout the novel, as a conscious or unconscious comparison to Jade.

Green, Cheyenne -- Son's wife. As a boy in Eloe, Florida, Son learned to play the piano from Miss Tyler who gave him lessons in exchange for Son weeding her garden. His buddies jokingly accused him of having sex with her. However, their laughter stopped when, at the end of a year, they sat on her porch, waiting for him and listening to him play. Cheyenne listens and waits, too. After the war, Son played in small clubs, and "Cheyenne slept at home -- waiting" (117). She must have tired of waiting because when Son came home from work early one morning, he found her in the bed with a thirteen year old boy. In retaliation, Son drove the car into the house; he tells Jadine that "'the car exploded and the bed caught fire. It was a little place we had, just a little box, and I drove through the bedroom wall. I pulled her out of the fire but she never made it'" (151). In her discussion of Morrison's attention to the effects of dispossession of Africans, Barbara Hill Rigney notes that "Native Americans, too, are deeply symbolic for Morrison" (71). In The Indian Heritage of America, Alvin M. Josephy,

Jr. describes several attempts by the Cheyennes in the latter half of the nineteenth century to follow policies set by the white government, but each time the Cheyennes were attacked; promises were broken. The one constant in the two brief references to Cheyenne is that she waited. Whatever she was waiting for from Son obviously never materialized, and she took action by having an affair. Perhaps Morrison draws attention to the Native Americans' waiting for a lasting peace with the white government and their retaliation when the government attempted to relocate on reservations. Just as the Cheyennes were diminished by a white culture, Cheyenne is diminished as a woman when Soldier tells Jadine that Cheyenne was not pretty but "had the best pussy in Florida, the absolute best" (219). Old Man suggests a diminishing of her too when he tells Son that the "law don't care about no dead colored gal" (214). On the other hand, Morrison will often invert the expected. The Cheyennes would banish murderers from the band, "a punishment that often meant eventual death, for lone wanderers rarely survived on the plains" (Josephy 119). Instead of having Cheyenne become the wanderer after committing murder, Morrison has Son kill Cheyenne, and he wanders the globe for seven years until homesickness drives him home. Green, her married name, is often the color associated with hope or promise which seems ironic here

because of Cheyenne's short life and because of her name's connection to the Native Americans' past.

Childs, Jadine (Jade) -- Ondine and Sydney's niece, Son's lover. Jadine, orphaned at twelve, has been reared by her aunt and uncle, Ondine and Sydney, who have worked many years for a white candy tycoon, Valerian Street. As Jadine's patron, Valerian provided her with an education, clothes, and travels. Jadine, whose nickname is Jade, is a graduate of the Sorbonne, an infrequent but acclaimed actress, and a model. She has been living in Paris but is visiting her aunt and uncle on Isle des Chevaliers when Son is discovered hiding in Margaret Street's closet. Later, in an argument, Son responds to Jade's remark about rape with, "'Rape? Why you little white girls always think somebody's trying to rape you?" Jadine is astonished. "'White?' . . . 'I'm not . . . you know I'm not white!'" (102). Although Jadine is African-American, she possesses a white attitude and inclinations, products of Valerian's money and her family's upbringing. Though she may not consciously be aware of this "whiteness," it was obvious to Son and to the African Woman (see <u>African Woman</u>) in Paris. However, Jadine lacks the self-awareness to fully acknowledge the truth of both their condemnations. Thoroughly Europeanized,

> Jadine . . . is completely oblivious to race and, specifically, to her African-American roots. So

> divorced is she from black culture, from that which is her legacy as a black American, she thinks of it in strictly stereotypical ways. (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 80)

When she and Son are living in New York, Jade revels in her cosmopolitan city, but Son yearns to return to Eloe, Florida, his small, all African-American hometown. However, once they arrive there, for Jadine, the life in Eloe is as alien as life on another planet. After their return to New York, Jadine and Son are never able to reconcile their differences. Therese explains to Son that Jadine "has forgotten her ancient properties" (263), giving credence to the African Woman's gesture of disdain and summing up the attitude behind Jadine's nickname, Jade. Most critical attention surrounding her name deals with the nickname, a diminutive of Jadine. The Oxford English Dictionary defines jade as "term of reprobation applied to a woman"; "worn out or exhausted; fatigued; fagged out"; "dulled or sated by continual use or indulgence." Sandra Pouchet Paquet combines these when she writes that

> in Eloe she is Jadine as in Jade, a worthless, disreputable woman, even as she appears to Sydney and Ondine later, when she leaves them to sort out their difficulties with the Streets. (511)

In terms of Jade forgetting her ancient properties, "'Morrison uses the image of the African Woman in the yellow dress as a symbol for the authenticity that the jaded Jadine

lacks'" (Christian qtd in Rigney 81). Jade's ancient properties have been lost, "dulled or sated" by her Europeanization to the extent that eventually she cannot connect on any level but sexual with Son, the personification of those properties. Barbara Hill Rigney contends that the characters who have two names in the novel, such as Jadine/Jade, are Morrison's symbols of fragmentation. As Son is preparing to leave the island, he remembers the night he arrived and Jadine's attentions to Valerian. "Gatekeeper, advance bitch, housebitch, welfare office torpedo, corporate cunt, tar baby side-of-the-road whore trap" (189); this list of names could indicate her further fragmentation. The mineral African jade could have supplied the background for Jadine's name and would have aligned her in a positive way with the African Woman, who certainly possesses the ancient properties. But there is no Africanness in Jade. Instead, Morrison's use of the diminutive name Jade and the African Woman's gesture of dismissal early in the novel condemn the character from the very beginning because no character in Morrison's world can deny Africa and survive in tact. Jadine's surname, Childs, is appropriate for the level of development of her sense of her African heritage and for her status as orphan.

> She rejects . . . her own Afro-American heritage and her blackness. . . . she chooses in effect to be a creation rather than a creator, an art historian rather than artist, a model rather than designer, a wife

> rather than woman. Thus, the very choice to have a clearly defined identity denies her access to origins and thus negates the very thing she seeks. (Byerman 81)

Childs, Ondine -- Sydney's wife, Jadine's aunt; works for Valerian and Margaret Street. Ondine and her husband Sydney have worked for Valerian Street for several decades, she as cook and her husband as butler. Like her niece Jadine, who has been Europeanized to the point of not acknowledging her heritage, Ondine, an African American, feels she has nothing in common with the Caribbean blacks who also work for the Streets. She never acknowledges that they have names; they are only Yardman and Mary, the generic name she has assigned to all the women who come to work with Yardman. When Son arrives, she is convinced that he "wasn't a Negro -- meaning one of them. He was a stranger"; she tells Sydney, "that nigger's not going nowhere" (87). In addition to the Europeanization which separates her from the others, Jade's nickname for Ondine, Nanadine, can be an indication of the fragmentation that Rigney suggests comes from double names (43). Rigney is correct in drawing attention to Ondine's fragmentation since in her attitude toward Son, Yardman and Mary, she, like her niece, seems to have lost her ancient properties. Yet Ondine has other names which emphasize her fragmentation. In a disparaging comment, Margaret remarks to Valerian that he is scared that "'Kingfish and Beulah won't take care of you'" (25), referring to Syndey and

Ondine. Ondine certainly views herself as set apart from any of the other help, but this comment places her in the company of Yardman and Mary since "Beulah" is the title of a television show that first aired on October 3, 1950. The title character, played by Ethel Waters and later Louise Beavers, was "TV's favorite black maid" who always saved her white "ever-bumbling employers" from comic situations (Brooks and March 77). However, Yardman (Gideon) and Son both show Ondine the respect she feels she deserves because they are the only two people on the island who call her Mrs. Childs. In a footnote to his essay "Naming Names: Three Recent Novels by Women Writers," Charles Fishman refers to Ondine with Undine in parenthesis (43), which is helpful because Ondine could not be found in a current dictionary or in the Oxford English Dictionary. However, both sources define the "undine" that Fishman offers. It is defined as "Also ondine . . . . A supernatural female being, imagined as inhabiting the water; a nymph" (Oxford English Dictionary) and "in folklore, a female water spirit who could earn a soul by marrying a mortal and bearing his child" (The American Heritage Dictionary). When Margaret links Beulah to Kingfish, at first glance it would appear that she is randomly selecting African-American television characters from her childhood. However, since Kingfish (Amos 'n Andy) is the position the character holds in the Mystic Knights of the Sea Lodge (Brooks and March 77), the

sea becomes the Beulah/Kingfish connection. With Ondine (Undine), Morrison turns to the world of folklore as she has so often done and also uses the irony that is a recurrent device in her naming. It is ironic that the childless Ondine should be named for a spirit that only earns a soul through marriage and childbearing. However, Ondine relates to Jadine as a mother does toward a daughter. When Jadine leaves the island with Son after the Christmas dinner fiasco and then returns to the island before flying to Paris, Ondine is upset because Jadine had left without showing any concern for Sydney and Ondine who were left behind to deal with the Streets. She tells Jadine that "'a girl has got to be a daughter first. She have to learn that. And if she never learns how to be a daughter, she can't never learn how to be a woman, I mean a real woman'"; she explains that "'a daughter is a woman that cares about where she come from and takes care of them that took care of her'" (242). Morrison would have created a type of Beulah character had she not given Ondine these lines and casts her as the teller of long hidden truths when she accuses Margaret of child abuse at the Christmas dinner. Both incidents reveal that like the folklore spirit, Ondine has a soul. The surname Childs could also be part of the irony since Ondine is childless; she is certainly in no way childlike.

Childs, Sydney -- Ondine's husband, Jadine's uncle, Valerian Street's butler. Sydney has known Valerian Street for fifty-one years, and there is an easy rapport between the two. However, "Sydney is Sydney to the person he calls Mr. Street, years of intimacy not being sufficient to challenge racial and class protocol" (Rigney 43). Sydney is proud of himself and of his position in the Street household. As a young man he went from Baltimore to Philadelphia "and there he became one of those industrious Philadelphia Negroes--the proudest people in the race" (51). Like Ondine, he considers himself in a class above the other black workers on the island. He is the one who holds a gun on Son and leads him into the Street dining room after Son is discovered hiding in Margaret's closet. Later, Son goes to the Childs' rooms to apologize to them but Ondine is alone. When Sydney walks in later, "his face zigzagged like lightning as soon as he saw who was standing there talking to his wife" (138). He tells Son that

> you the kind of man that does worry me. . . . I am a Phil-a-delphia Negro mentioned in the book of the very same name. My people owned drugstores and taught school while yours were still cutting their faces open so as to be able to tell one from the other. (140)

With this comment, Sydney joins Jadine and Ondine in forgetting his ancient properties. His African heritage is clearly not an issue he has even considered; being a Philadelphia Negro is more important. This underscores

Barbara Hill Rigney's contention that the characters in the novel that have two names are fragmented (43); Margaret calls him Sydney the Precious and Kingfish. The former could be a name she uses out of jealousy of the loyalty Sydney shows Valerian; the latter is an obvious reference to a character from the television situation comedy Amos 'n' Andy. In the show,

> George Stevens [is] a conniving character who was always looking for a way to make a fast buck. As head of the Mystic Knight of the Sea Lodge, where he held the position of 'Kingfish,' he got most of the lodge brothers involved in his schemes. (Brooks and March 36)

This description does not fit Sydney in any way, so it seems that Margaret's use of the name is only a means of belittling the proper Sydney. And it may have been. However, "the humor [in Amos 'n' Andy] certainly derived from the fact that [the African American characters] were shiftless, conniving, not-too-bright *blacks*" (Brooks and March 37). Morrison's use of irony comes into play because these are the characteristics that Sydney attributes to Yardman and Son but are characteristics of everything Sydney knows that he is not. This sense of superiority is inherent in his name. H.L. Mencken draws attention to the use of surnames as given names, a practice the English invented (615). "The Sidney family was founded in England by William Sidney or Sydney, the Chamberlain of Henry II, who was from Anjou" (Withycombe). Since a chamberlain is "an official

who manages the household of a sovereign or nobleman" (The American Heritage Dictionary), Morrison's naming is apt since Sydney is a butler to Valerian Street, a man named for an emperor.

Eloe -- Son's hometown, located in Florida. When Son answers Jadine's questions about where he is from, he explains that he is from Eloe in Florida. She replies, "'God. I know it already: gas stations, dust, heat, dogs, shacks general store with ice coolers full of Dr. Pepper'". Son corrects her perceptions, telling her there are no shacks in Eloe. She can hardly believe him when he tells her "there are ninety houses in Eloe. All black" (147); to Son, "'nothing's better than Eloe'" (142). After the explosive Christmas dinner, Son and Jade go to New York, where Jade delights in showing him all the sights. However, interspersed in the details of their actions in New York, Morrison will insert a variation of "he insisted on Eloe" (192). They eventually "left hand-in-hand for" (198) Florida but did not return that way because Eloe was too much for Jadine. There, Son returns to family, Old Man and Aunt Rosa, and to friends like Soldier and Ernie Paul with the ease of a man who has been gone days instead of years. For Jadine, however, Eloe is "rotten . . . . A burnt-out place. There was no life here" (223), so she leaves when she can stand it no longer. When Son returns to New York,

they argue about living in New York. Son tells her, "'Anybody ask you where you from, you give them five towns. You're not *from* anywhere. I'm from Eloe" (229). There is no Eloe, Florida listed in the reference sources I checked. Charles Fishman suggests that Eloe is possibly derived from "Elohim, God" and describes it as "Son's edenic Floridian birthplace where there are 'no birth certificates (174)' and one is named in an elemental and richly personal way." No one there is named for candy nor do their names come from randomly pointing to words in the Bible. Instead, there are names like Old Man and Son. "This elemental form of naming exists in Eloe because Eloe is meant to represent the past, home, at-one-ness, original identity" (34-35). However, this paradise, this Eden is not enough to hold Son when Eloe is pitted against Jadine, the tar baby. After their separate returns from Eloe and their arguments, Jadine leaves New York. In her absence the photographs that she took in Florida arrive in the mail. Son looks at them--his family, his friends, his neighbors, the houses, the landscape--and concludes that "it all looks miserable in the photographs, sad, poor and even poor-spirited" (254). Instead of turning to Eloe for succor, he returns to Isle des Chevalier and seeks Jadine in the world of folklore and legend, where Therese leaves him rather than in the world of Eloe, the world of Elohim, God. Once again, the Bible is not enough to sustain a Morrison character.

Estee, Alma -- friend of Gideon and Therese's, sometimes lives on Place de Vent with them. Alma occasionally works with Gideon and Therese at the Street home where the inhabitants consider her one of the interchangeable islanders. In fact, Jade misnames her when she encounters Alma working in the airport restroom. She tips her, then says, "'Bye, Mary, I have to go. Good luck.'"
"'Alma,'whispered the girl. 'Alma Estee'" (249). Alma will later lie to Son about Jade because Jade misnamed her and Son never bought her the wig she wanted so much.

> Oh, she was good enough to run to the store for him, and good enough to clean the toilet for American black girls to pee in, and to be tipped by them but not have her name remembered by them and not good enough to be remembered at all by the chocolate eater who did go to the trouble of knowing her name. (258)

Charles Fishman suggests that the name Alma Estee should "probably . . . be read as Soul of the Island, in any case, a figure out of the slave past" (footnote 14, 43). The figure from the slave past is appropriate since Alma does work on the island and in the airport at menial jobs. However, she is not completely the Soul of the Island; the fact that Morrison takes care to describe the wig Alma buys for herself as synthetic diminishes that interpretation, to an extent. In their final encounter, Son sees in her the women of Eloe and all the women who have not forgotten their ancient properties. He places her in a mythical island

past when he associates her with midnight skin, antelope eyes, bougainvillea, a baby jaguar, and an avacado; she takes her place with the African Woman Jadine encounters in Paris. But Alma has been seduced by the white culture's perception of beauty in her desire for the wig as surely as Pecola was in The Bluest Eye. For this reason, she is not fully the Soul of the Island which Jade's misnaming underscores.

Foucalt, Marie Therese -- the washwoman at L'Arbe de la Croix, Gideon's aunt. Therese, who was once a wet nurse and who Alma describes as having magic breasts, comes regularly from Queen of France to wash for the Streets. Therese is almost blind but is perceptive; she knows Son is on the island before anyone else does. Gideon tells her, "'you damn near blind, but I have to hand it to you. Some things you see better than me'" (91-92). Therese's love for apples, which are contraband in Dominique, causes her to try to steal the special apples Valerian had for the Christmas dinner and gets her and Gideon fired. Marie is a diminutive of Mary and is not a surprising name since "all the baptized black women on the island had Mary among their names" (32). The biblical Mary is worshipped as Mother of Christ and even though Therese had no children, she was a wet nurse for many French children. Therese is also "the archetypal earth mother by virtue of her 'magic breasts'" (Paquet 508).

There is another biblical resonance in her name. In her association with apples, she suggests Eve; like Eva (Eve) in Sula, she names. Jadine is "the chippy, the fast-ass"; Ondine is repeatedly "machete hair" and Sydney is "bow-tie". Marie-Therese also suggests empress (Magness 94, Lee 35), "Maria Theresia of Austria" (Withycombe), but Therese has no power in Place de Vent nor on Isle des Chevalier. Instead she is the wash woman who is not even allowed in the main house to use the bathroom. However, Therese does have power through her blindness. Her blindness "is both literal and magical. . . . [She has the] ability to see what others cannot." When she names (again like Eva) Son the chocolate-eater, she

> predicts his ultimate commitment to his color rather than Valerian's. She sees the past as well as the present and future: she is said to be one of the blind race, for whom the Isle des Chevaliers is named. (Byerman 79)

Dorothy Lee notes that her name suggests Tiresias since she "truly 'sees'" when Valerian, who is metaphorically blind, cannot (35), evoking a parallel of Tiresias and Oedipus the King to Therese and Valerian, the man named for an emperor. As Tieresias, blind but knowing, her pronouncement that Jadine has "forgotten her ancient properties" (263) is one of the most insightful observations in the novel. Therese knows the waters between her home and the Isle des Chevaliers well; Gideon tells Son, "'she knows those waters

just like the fisherman'" (131), even though she is nearly blind. When Son arrives at Gideon and Therese's from New York and wants to go to Isle des Chevliers secretly, it is Therese who takes him at night. "Therese insisted on steering for she knew the way . . . . The feel of the current was what she went by." Each time he woke from a light sleep, Son's eyes "rested on the shadow of Marie Therese Foucault . . . . intent on a horizon she could not possibly see even if she were not as blind as justice. Her hands on the lever were nimble, steady" (261). Such competence on the water is not surprising; in French her surname refers to the "Foucault currents, eddy currents" (Harrap's New Standard French and English Dictionary). Her ease in unpredictable currents portrays Therese as a woman who is a survivor, one who will still be around when and if the rich Americans leave the paradise they think they have created. In Marie-Therese Foucalt, Morrison has used the past with its stories from the Bible, legend, and myth to name a character in a novel that raises the question of how we grow when deprived of a heritage.

Gideon (see Mary for discussion of Yardman) -- Therese's nephew, the Streets' gardener. For the Streets, Gideon ran errands and did general maintenance plus "swept, mowed, trimmed, clipped transplanted, moved stones, hauled twigs and leaves, prayed and staked" (34), which probably accounts

for their calling him Yardman. As a young man, Gideon had left Dominique, gone to Quebec, then "by much subterfuge (including marriage to an American Negro) got into the States where money orders, leisure suits and TV abounded" (93). He was in the States for twenty years; the marriage did not work out, and he was lured home to Dominique by Therese's letters, which begged him to return to manage the family estates. When Gideon finally returns, there is no property. With no college certificates or diplomas and no ties to old friends in business, Gideon must take work when and where he can find it. Gideon and Son meet when Valerian asks Gideon to take Son to get a haircut. Gideon and Therese take him to their house on Place de Vent, and there Gideon tells Son the history of the Isle des Chevaliers and the legend of the blind horsemen. Near the end of the novel, after Jadine leaves him in New York, Son returns to the islands but cannot go to Isle des Chevaliers because of his argument with Valerian. Instead, he heads to Gideon and Therese's house to find out what he can about Jadine's return. Gideon advises Son to just let her go; he tells Son "'A woman, man. Just a woman'" (259), not realizing how effective the tar baby Jadine has been. Gideon's sage advice concerning Jadine implies a degree of the power of seeing that Therese has but also suggests even more strongly his biblical namesake, Gideon, who was "one of the Judges over Israel" (Withycombe), one of the major judges

(Stewart). Gideon is derived from the Hebrew "'having only a stump (for a hand)'" (Withycombe), "' to cut off'" (Stewart), Gidh'on, from gadha, "he hewed" (The American Heritage Dictionary). It is possible that Morrison wanted the irony of a yardman, one who hews, named for a biblical Judge. It is more probable that to hew applies to Gideon as yardman, but that even more strongly "having only a stump for a hand" reflects the fragmentation of the black island man who left his home, traveled to the promised land of the States but returned with nothing from his twenty years there that enables him to prosper. Instead he works as a yardman but only at Valerian Street's pleasure. Gideon and Therese are fired for the theft of apples, banished from Valerian's man-made paradise of L'Arbe de la Croix. After his expulsion, Gideon finds work hiring himself out to the taxi drivers, "drumming up business . . . at airports and hotels for the men who owned their taxis. They would tip him for the fares he got them" (255). Gideon's fragmentation is even more pointed when one realizes that although he works for the Streets for three years, they never know Gideon's name and label him by his occupation. After Jadine has referred to him once as Yardman, Son asks her if that is his name. "'No. . . . But he answers to it'" (98). The biblical name is unknown on Isle des Chevaliers and has no power for Yardman, provides no sense of identity. Again,

Morrison's biblical names only suggest but rarely define character.

Isle des Chevaliers -- a Caribbean island that Valerian Street owns and has retired to. Morrison stresses the importance of this location, just as she did with the Bottom in Sula, by introducing it and its history early in the novel. In fact, the island is mentioned in line one; "the end of the world, as it turned out, was nothing more than a collection of magnificent houses on Isle des Chevaliers" (7). From her window, Jadine can see the hills on the opposite side of the island "where one hundred horsemen rode one hundred horses, so Valerian said. That was how the island got its name" (40). Valerian bases his facts on the legend Dr. Michelin told him. However, Margaret tells a different story; in her version, based on a neighbor's tale, there was only one French soldier on a horse, not one hundred, so the name should be Isle de le Chevalier, Island of the Chevalier. A chevalier is "a member of certain orders of knighthood or merit, as the Legion of Honor in France; a French nobleman of the lowest rank; a knight; a chivalrous, gallant man" (The American Heritage Dictionary). In both versions of the tale, the rider(s) is a Chevalier, one associated with French nobility; these tales are told by the Streets, the wealthy white owners of the island. When Son hears the story from Gideon (Yardman), an island

workman, the riders are blind descendants from the "slaves who went blind the minute they saw Dominique"; "their ship foundered and sank with Frenchmen, horses and slaves aboard" (130). Some of the blind slaves and some of the horses were carried by the currents to the island. The partially blind slaves were found and returned to Queen of France; the totally blind ones hid and are the horsemen who

> ride those horses all over the hills. They learned to ride through the rain forest avoiding all sorts of trees and things. They race each other, and for sport they sleep with the swamp women in Sein de Vieilles. (131)

The identity of the riders, and therefore the island's name, depends on whether the tale is told by a rich man or by a worker. When Valerian and Son argue at Christmas dinner,

> Somewhere in the back of Valerian's mind one hundred French chevaliers were roaming the hills on horses. Their swords were in their scabbards and their epaulets glittered in the sun. Backs straight, shoulders high--alert but restful in the security of the Napoleonic Code. (177)

In contrast,

> somewhere in the back of Son's mind one hundred black men on one hundred unshod horses rode blind and naked through the hills and had done so for hundreds of years. . . . they were still there racing for sport in the hills behind this white man's house. (131)

Keith E. Byerman argues that the island is "a perverse Eden" where Valerian

> has created a carefully controlled environment, but primeval nature constantly threatens to reassert its authority, as is suggested by repeated personifications of butterflies, trees, flowers, and the land itself. (76)

Charles Fishman lists Isle des Chevaliers as one of "those names [in the novel] that seem intended to elevate the narrative to a level of myth" (34). Lauren Lepow contends that the island is a character which bothers Jadine with its excess; "by endowing her island with such excess, Morrison can easily make of it both Eden and hell" (365). Each of these critics has valid points that pertain to the naming of the island. When Margaret's version of the legend differs from Valerian's, the door is open for multiple interpretations of the story of the mythical horsemen, open for the discrepancy between Valerian and Gideon's versions which reflect class differences. Even if the horsemen are the black slaves, ultimately, the island is named by and for a conquering people. However, as "emperor" Valerian sits dispiritedly in his greenhouse near the end of the novel, primeval nature slowly reclaims its own:

> the bricks that edged the courtyard were popping up out of the ground, leaning every which way. Urged . . . out of the earth, like they were poked from beneath. . . . [The ants] had already eaten through the loudspeaker wires . . . . (245)

To name does not always mean to possess.

L'Arbe de las Croix (Tree of the Cross) -- the Street home on Isle des Chevaliers. Of the houses on the island, which Valerian Steet owns,

> the oldest and most impressive was L'Arbe de la Croix. It had been designed by a brilliant Mexican architect, but the Haitian laborers had no union and therefore could not distinguish between craft and art, so while the panes did not fit their sashes, the windowsills and door saddles were carved lovingly to perfection. . . . It was a wonderful house. (8)

When visitors came "they all agreed that except for the unfortunate choice of its name it was 'the most handsomely articulated and blessedly unrhetorical house in the Caribbean'" (9). Even though the Streets have owned the house for years, in the past they only vacationed there. However, Valerian, Margaret, Sydney and Ondine have been at L'Arbe de la Croix since his retirement four years earlier. Even though Margaret wants to leave, Valerian has made this his retreat. In the greenhouse he raises flowers, listens to classical music and talks to the ghost of his dead wife. When he left Philadelphia he missed only "hydrangeas and the postman"; he can grow hydrangeas,

> but the postman was lost to him forever. The rest of what he loved he brought with him: some records, garden shears, a sixty-four bulb chandelier, a light blue tennis shirt and the Principal Beauty of Maine [Margaret]. (9)

It would appear that Valerian had created an island paradise for himself. But just as the Haitian workers had not been

able to discriminate between craft and art, Valerian cannot discriminate between innocence and peace of mind. He thought he had the latter in his paradise, but it was his blind insistence on the former that eventually ruined his peace of mind. He will discover that when their only child was a young boy that Margaret had abused him; this is the knowledge and agony that Lauren Lepow refers to in her discussion of the house's name. Even though Charles Fishman translates L'Arbe de la Croix as Tree of the Cross, Lepow argues that

> the name is a tease: 'arbe'is not quite 'arbre,' yet we think of tree, increasingly, in this context, of the primeval tree of Paradise. The 'croix' foreshadows the agony that the house's inhabitants will experience and the redemption they may or may not attain to. (366-67)

Visitors may consider the name unfortunate but it is apt. It too has the power of the biblical cross; the people in the house most affected by the knowledge of Margaret's actions -- Margaret, Valerian, Ondine --are changed, perhaps redeemed; there are three of them, the number associated with the crucifixion.

Mary -- the generic name applied by the inhabitants of L'Arbe de la Croix to "all the women" Gideon (Yardman) brings to work there; they do not realize that they are all Therese. When the chocolate wrappers are first discovered, Sydney thinks the person stealing the chocolate "'Must be

Yardman' . . . 'or one of them Marys'" (32). To the inhabitants of L'Arbe de la Croix, Mary

> might be [Yardman's] wife, his mother, his daughter, his sister, his woman, his aunt or even a next-door neighbor. She looked a little different [to them] each time, except for her Greta Garbo hat. They all referred to her as Mary and couldn't ever be wrong about it because all the baptized black women on the island had Mary among their names. (33)

Gideon explains to Son that even though he gets along well with the Childs and the Streets, Therese does not. They frequently instruct him to get rid of Therese and he agrees. "'But I bring her right back and tell them it's a brand new woman'"; they don't realize it is the same person because "they don't pay her any attention" (132). Gideon, called Yardman by all on the Isle, and Therese (Mary) do not seem bothered by this lack of the use of their given names; they obviously see it as just one more fault of the wealthy white couple and the proud African American couple and their niece who feel superior to the island blacks. But Son, as an African American, is bothered by these labels, by a lack of interest in names which indicates a lack of interest in these two people, and by implication all like them, as individuals. "It bothered him that everybody called Gideon Yardman, as though he had not been mothered" (138). At the Christmas dinner Son says that he wish Gideon could have come.

> 'Who?' asked Valerian.
> 'Gideon. Yardman.'
> 'His name is Gideon?' asked Jadine.
> 'What a beautiful name. Gideon.' Valerian smiled.
> 'Well, at least we knew Mary's name, Mary,' said Jadine.
> 'Nope,' said Son.
> 'No?'
> 'Therese.' (173).

Later, in an argument, Jadine makes a reference to a yardman. Son's heated response is, "'His name is Gideon! Gideon! Not Yardman, and Mary Therese Foucault, you hear me!" (228). It may be that he fears that her lack of understanding about Yardman and Mary may carry over to him. The generic use of Mary and Yardman is Morrison's indictment on any culture, white or African-American, that is dismissive of any peoples that are not like them.

Nommo -- young girl in New York that Son "rescues," feeds, takes home with him and Jadine. While helping a trucker unload boxes, Son hears

> a young girl with a shaved head and a small ring in her nostril . . . cursing a man right in the middle of the street. The girl was in jeans, platform shoes and a thin sweater. She had the voice of a sergeant and her language was nasty enough to be memorable. (195)

Yet Son is affected by her eyes; "inside her narrowed angry eyes were many other eyes -- some of them hurt, some brave, some just lonely hollow-eyes, and her shaved head reminded Son of his sister" (196). Son befriends the young girl,

Nommo, and that night while "Son and Jadine slept like puppies . . . [she] made off with the change" (196). In African archetypes, "the most significant . . . is the Great Mother, the giver of both life and wisdom, who is *nommo*, the creative potential and the sacred aspect of nature itself" (Rigney 68-69). *Nommo* is also a "West African philosophical concept . . . 'the magic power of the word' -- [which is] the very basis of music." It is the "very essence of Black music making" in the United States.

> African-American women musicians would rely on the power of *Nommo*, which would permit them to incorporate in their music and to impart to others by means of their music a collective consciousness and a very specific communal yearning for freedom. (Davis 6)

Angela Y. Davis explains that *Nommo* helps these women

> in shaping through song an expression of the special meaning of Black womanhood, its realities, its limitations, its socio-historical legacy, and its collective potential with respect to the forging of a new society, based on economic, racial, and sexual equality. (6-7)

Morrison seems to connect the character not with the Great Mother but with the musical qualities of *Nommo* through song -- her voice, her crying out, her curses. Her song is one of the realities and limitatations of Black womanhood; she has nowhere to stay that night and even while she "word whips" the man, his friends casually lean on a car listening and even her target turns his back on her and walks away.

Through these dismissive male actions, *Nommo* and its magic power of the word are diminished which may account for all the eyes (collective womanhood?) that Son sees in her eyes -- hurt, brave, hollow-eyed. Morrison could be holding up Nommo in contrast to Jadine; Nommo may be what happens to young African-American women when they are not pampered, well educated, and beautiful. Yet in her name, her shaved head, her nose ring, and her eyes, Nommo seems not to have forgotten her ancient properties as Jadine has. There is also the possibility that as a form of *Nommo*, Morrison has the young woman standing up to the man, restating with an African-American dialect, the "No mo'!" suggested by her song.

Old Man -- Son's father who lives in Eloe, Florida. Although his name is Franklin G. Green, he "had been called Old Man since he was seven years old" (212). Old Man lives by a strict set of moral laws and will not allow Jadine and Son to sleep together in his house. He makes pronouncements such as, "'You told the truth and so you got to live by the truth'" (213). When Son tells his father that Jadine is special, Old Man replies, "'So am I, Son. So am I'" (213). When Old Man unexpectedly discovers his son is home after an eight year absence, his first words are, "'Save me, you got back," but "they didn't touch. They didn't know how" (213). Being undemonstrative does not mean, however, that Old Man

does not love Son. Even though Son regularly sent his father money orders while he was gone, Old Man did not cash them all because he did not want to arouse any suspicions. When he asked Son why he had not sent a note with the money orders, Son had only a lame excuse. Since he had no personal notes from Son, Old Man kept all the envelopes because "'they had your handwritin on em, you know. You wrote it, that part anyway. 'Franklin Green.' You got a nice handwritin" (215). Old Man's role in the plot development is small; leaving him out would not have altered the plot or the theme. But encountering Old Man makes Son's characterization and name easier to understand. Old Man takes on the qualities of a wise elder when we notice that he has carried a name of respect since his childhood, when we listen to him speak about truth and when we take into consideration his comment that he is special. These help us accept the possible interpretations of Son (see Son) as son of Africa or Son of God. Old Man's given name of Franklin could be an example of "the long survival of names taken over during the Revolutionary period" (Mencken 614). Even though this probably applies to white names, according to Black Names in America:

> a very large class of slave names . . . which were clearly identical with White nomenclature of the period, show the direct or indirct influence of the owner in the naming of the slave child. (Puckett 54)

Franklin is on a list of slave names from 1800-1864 but not on the 1619-1799 list (Puckett 73, 28), indicating a Revolutionary period influence. Like Old Man, Benjamin Franklin, for whom he could be named, has become a revered figure. Green is associated with hope and growth, both of which apply to the wise Old Man. It is also a name used frequently among freed slaves from 1800-1864 (Puckett 64). However, the name Old Man and its cultural connotations and its ties to Son's name override any considerations of a name that might have any ties to slavery or white man's naming.

Ryk -- the lover in Paris who gave Jadine the sealskin coat and who wants to marry her. Jadine leaves Paris for Isle des Chevaliers, hoping that by leaving she could more easily decide whether or not she should marry Ryk, who is "desperate to marry her . . . . exciting and smart and fun and sexy . . ."(40). He is "white but European" (41) which makes her unsure of whether it is she he wants or just any black female who is like her. His name phonetically suggests the German "reich" which is usually associated with empire, but it also means rich (man) which is applicable to Ryk since he does give Jadine a full length sealskin coat as a gift. Reich also refers to rich mineral treasures (Wildhagen English-German Dictionary), which contrasts to the relative inexpensive jade (Jadine). Ryk's name's relation to wealth and his living as one of her peers or

superiors in Paris, suggests the life that has led Jadine from her ancient properties.

Sea Bird II -- the boat where Son hides after deserting his ship; though all three are unnamed at this point in the novel, Margaret and Jadine are on board, possibly returning from a shopping trip. Sea Bird certainly implies flight and that is what Son is doing; he is leaving behind eight years of running away because of Cheyenne's death and unknown to him, he is heading toward Jadine. However, in his relationship with her he will not find the freedom he thinks he has gained; this is suggested by the first line of the novel, "he believed he was safe" (1). The boat does belong to Valerian and could represent his flight from the candy business of Philadelphia to his retirement on Isle des Chevalier. Like Son, the freedom he seeks alludes him; Valerian is not the same once he learns of his son's abuse. His and Margaret's roles reverse and he becomes dependent on her. The elusiveness of freedom in flight could be implied in the name Sea Bird *II*; freedom was not attained in *I* and the search continues.

Sein de Vielles -- the swamp on Isle des Chevaliers. In French, Sein de Vielles (Vieux) translates as the "breast" of the "old, aged, the ancient, venerable" (The New Cassell's French Dictionary: French-English, English-

French). In chapter one, Morrison, in her careful description of the novel's setting, describes how the river has left its course because of man's interference, when "laborers imported from Haiti came to clear the land" (7). Man upset the balance of nature on the island with his desire to dominate it; one victim was the river -- "it crested, then lost its course, and finally its head. [It was] evicted from the place where it had lived . . . " (7).

> Poor insulted, brokenhearted river. Poor demented stream. Now it sat in one place like a grandmother and became a swamp the Haitians called Sein de Vielles. And witch's tit it was: a shriveled fogbound oval seeping with a thick black substance that even mosquitoes could not live near. (8)

As Son and Jadine return from an afternoon on the beach, they run out of gas. While Son walks to get help, Jadine remains with the jeep near the swamp, which to her "was the ugly part of Isle des Chevaliers--the part she averted her eyes from whenever she drove past" (155). She decides to sketch Sein de Vielles and walks toward an area but sinks up to her knees. Jadine is able to pull herself free by clinging to a young tree, unaware of the mythical swamp women who hang in the trees and "mate with the horsemen up in the hills" (158). They realize that Jadine wishes to get away from them:

> The women hanging from the trees were quiet now, but arrogant--mindful as they were of their value, their exceptional femaleness; knowing as they did that the

> first world of the world had been built with their sacred properties . . . they wondered at the girl's desperate struggle down below to be free, to be something other than they were. (157)

When Jadine frees herself, she is covered in "black stuff . . . shiny in places and where it was dry it was like mucilage" (157). After she returns to L'Arbe de la Croix, Margaret tells her it looks like pitch, connecting Jadine to the tar of the tar baby that she becomes for Son. That the damning tar on Jadine comes from a place named the witch's tit is not too surprising considering the role that breasts play in the novel. As an orphan, Jadine is metaphorically separated from her mother's nurturing milk, her guidance. Her aunt Ondine is childless, which is also how Margaret considers herself once everyone knows about her abuse of Michael; therefore, neither can provide the mother's milk, the nurturing that Jadine needs. In Florida, Jadine dreams of the women from Eloe, dead and alive, who are part of Son's life. "They stood around in the room, jostling each other gently, gently-- . . . revealing one breast and then two and Jadine was shocked" (222). Old, nearly blind Therese has, according to Alma, "magic breasts. They still give milk'" (249). The women from Eloe, Therese, and the swamp women are fertile nurturers, women who have not forgotten their ancient properties. None of these women relate to or accept Jadine; they reject her, metaphorically spitting on the sidewalk as the African Woman did in Paris.

They do not bear the negative, sterile "witch's tit" but the breasts of the wise, ancient ones, Sein de Vielles.

Son -- Jadine's lover. Chapter one begins with his deserting ship, hiding in Sea Bird II, landing on Isle des Chevaliers, and eventually hiding in L'Arbre de la Croix where Margaret discovers him in her closet. When Sydney takes him to Valerian Street at gun point, Valerian surprises everyone by asking the fugitive to stay for dinner. At this point in the novel, the end of chapter three, the character has not been named. To the reader, he is only a stranger, an interloper; Morrison, who always names immediately and perceptively, merely refers to the character with masculine pronouns, "he," "him," "his." When Valerian says to the stranger, as he eats that first dinner, "'I'm sorry, but I don't know your name'", the stranger replies "'That makes us even' . . . 'I don't know yours either'" (80). However, the members of the household quickly name him. To Margaret, he is "literally a nigger in the woodpile" (71); to Ondine he is "that thieving Negro" and "a crazy Black" (76); to Sydney he is "that nigger" (84), "wife-raper," a "stinking ignorant swamp nigger" (85) and "a wild-eyed pervert who hides in women's closets" (85-86). Such derogatory names are conjured up by the others' fears of the stranger with the dreadlocks who had been hiding in the swamp for almost two weeks. With her powers,

Therese had known a stranger was on the island and had Gideon make it easy for him to get into the pantry where "he" took chocolate and bottled water; to Therese he is "the chocolate eater" (89). After Gideon sees a shadowy figure on the house grounds, he connects the figure with the mythical blind slaves, the horsemen. "What he saw must have been a rider"; he and Therese "hoped the horseman would have access to the food" (90). Therese thinks the stranger is "'a horseman come down here to get her [Jadine]'" (91). Unlike the others, Jadine does not join in the naming and appears only mildly concerned about the stranger until she comes from her bath and finds him in her bedroom. After he grabs her from behind when she attacks him because of an insult, she calls him "ape," "nigger" (103), "ugly barefoot baboon," and "animal" (104). Later, the stranger realizes that "he'd have to think up a story to tell them about who he was and what his name was." In the eight years of hiding because of Cheyenne's death, he has had "seven documented identities and before that a few undocumented ones, so he barely remembered his real original name himself. Actually the name most truly his wasn't on any" (119) form of identification.

> Son. It was the name that called forth the true him. The him that he never lied to, the one he tucked in at night and the one he did not want to die. The other selves were like the words he spoke--fabrications of the moment, misinformation required to protect Son from harm and to secure that one reality at least. (119)

Lauren Lepow argues that

> 'Son' is the most overt of Morrison's Miltonic allusions in the novel . . . . When we first see Son at Isle des Chevaliers, he is clearly satanic, an intruder in Eden, a terrifying, threatening figure, a man with 'hair like snakes' . . . . (370)

Lepow notes that "star imagery associates Son with Lucifer: Son is 'as silent as a star' . . . and Jadine will find it 'so very hard to forget the man who fucked like a star' . . ." (370). During Son's next meeting with Valerian, when Valerian asks him his name, he answers truthfully with his birth name, "'Green. William Green.'" Valerian immediately attempts to establish a position of power, which he already has since it is his island and his house, when he responds with a diminutive of William, "'Well, good morning, Willie. Sleep well?'" (125). But Son does not succumb to any power play nor appear awed with Valerian's statement that he is named for an emperor. In fact, power shifts in Son's favor when he knows how to treat Valerian's beloved flowers so they will bloom. After a hair cut and a new suit, "in a white shirt unbuttoned at the cuffs and throat . . . he was gorgeous. He had preserved his mustache but the kinky beard was gone along with the chain-gang hair" (133-134). As Jadine talks to the man she called "ape" and "nigger," "she was more frightened of his good looks than she had been by his ugliness the day before. . . . Spaces,

mountains, savannas--all those were in his forehead and eyes" (135). Lepow contends that once his appearance changes

> Son upsets the system we were encouraged to lock him into. . . . Transformed from serpent to spirit of light, he becomes plausible as a redeemer who may rescue Jadine from Valerian's world. The very actions that initially evoked the satanic now require us to see Son as its opposite. It is, after all, Son's intrusion into Valerian's troubled Eden that ultimately precipitates everyone's return to his or her true self. By the novel's conclusion, Margaret, Sydney, Ondine, Jade, even Valerian himself are liberated from the false and stressful positions they occupied in Valerian's hollow hierarchy. (371)

The liberation from false positions could be the working out of the "contentions among you" (1 Corinthians 1:11) that are mentioned in Morrison's epitaph for the novel. Son's name is not a result of the Bible naming ritual found in Song of Solomon. His father carried the name Old Man from the time he was seven years old (see Old Man) and "when he grew up, got married, had a baby boy, the baby was called Old Man's son until the second child was born and the first became simply Son" (212). He tells Jadine, "everybody calls me Son" (148). Lepow's interpretation and the biblical resonances of the names Old Man and Son plus the fact that everyone calls him Son, lends strong evidence that Son is indeed a biblical redeemer in the novel. But the protagonists in Morrison's works are never that firmly grounded in the Bible. There is always another framework

that supplements the name, that expands the reader's understanding of the name and its relationship to the novel. That is the case with Son. Barbara Hill Rigney views him as

> a son of Africa and also a son of the American black male experience . . . . Son is dispossessed, permanently 'out-of-town,' his name being his only connection with community and black tradition. (43)

"In contrast to Jadine, Son admits to feeling 'out of place' . . . in the Street's home, signifying his lack of attraction to Western culture" (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 84). Wilfred D. Samuels and Clenora Hudson-Weems combine Lepow and Rigney's views by seeing him as "Africa's son/Son, the bearer of its culture and values, its black Messiah come to save Jadine from the streets/Streets of Babylon" (85). Son's role as Africa's son seems clear when he associates more easily with the black Caribbeans Gideon and Therese, who are more in touch with their heritage, than with the African-American Sydney and Ondine from Philadelphia, who feel superior to all the Caribbean blacks and have no sense of their ancient properties. Keith E. Byerman argues that

> Son is a traditional figure in black history and lore, the fugitive from an unfair system [Cheyenne's accidental death]. . . . He has many identities, but he very quickly learns the true names and relationships of everyone else, including the natives. (77)

On Isle des Chevaliers, only Son knows the true names of Yardman and Mary. Lepow thinks that by Therese labeling Son

"the chocolate eater," that "Morrison may be invoking the Aztec veneration of a chocolate drink they believed to be the gods' food" (371).

> Duly authenticated by Therese as one of the original horsemen, Son is the embodiment of the folk . . . . He is an extraordinary figure in the way Morrison envelops him in a variety of myths to have him emerge convincingly as the embodiment of phallic power and race consciousness. (Paquet 509)

To Sandra Pouchet Paquet "he is Ulysses . . . [who is led] to the Isle des Chevaliers to fulfil his role as mythic horseman" (509). Throughout the novel, Jadine is depicted as the tar baby that attempts to lure Son from a more nobel path, one fit for a Son of so many mythologies. He, then, becomes part of a folktale.

> The closing image is not of blind horsemen racing thunderously across the hills, but of Brer Rabbit making his way across the briar patch. If Son is exactly where he wants to be, where he was born and raised as the Tar Baby tale tells us, then he is well poised to renew the phallic quest of the blind horsemen. (Pacquet 513)

No one of the critics' interpretations can stand alone satisfactorily; with Son, Morrison has created a character whose simple name requires multiple approaches before it can be fully understood.

Stor Konigsgaarten, H.M.S. -- ship that Son deserted. "He stood at the sailing of H.M.S. *Stor Konigsgaarten* and sucked

in great gulps of air, his heart pounding in sweet expectation as he stared at the harbor." When he is ready to leave, with his shoes tied to his belt loops,

> trusting what his feet could tell him more than what his hands could, [he] changed his mind [about diving headfirst] and simply stepped away from the ship. The water was so soft and warm that it was up to his armpits before he realized he was in it. (1)

Charles Fishman suggests that the translation of the ship's name might be King's Great Garden (34). If so, then Son is leaving one imperial Great Garden to go to another since Isle des Chevaliers is owned by Valerian who is named for an emperor, and on the island he has attempted to create an artificial paradise, an Eden, a Great Garden, if you will, in his greenhouse. The novel begins and ends with Son arriving on the island secretly. In the beginning he deserts a King's ship to go to the Emperor's house, but that trip was unsuccessful. Ironically, in the end of the novel, he leaves a motorboat to go to the briarpatch in search of a tar baby or to become one of the blind horsemen. The implication is that he might be more successful on the second trip.

Street, Margaret Lenora Lordi -- Valerian's second wife, Michael's mother. When Valerian first sees Margaret, he is a widower on a boring business trip in Maine. To relieve his boredom he takes a walk, encounters a Snow Carnival

Parade and notices a float with a polar bear that has its front paws "raised in benediction. A rosy-cheeked girl was holding on to one of the bear's forefeet like a bride." Valerian is dazzled by the girl in the red velvet coat with the ermine muff; the "Bride of Polar Bear became his bride" (45-46). Less than a year after she graduates from high school, Margarette Lenore Lordi, whose family had lived in a trailer and a concrete block house, marries one of the richest men in Philadelphia. Rigney's contention that in this novel two names equals fragmentation (43) certainly applies to Margaret. Before she is even a young mother, she is Margarette Lenore Lordi, daughter; Bride of the Polar Bear, beauty queen; Margaret Street, young wife of a wealthy man; Principal Beauty of Maine, a newspaper label. However, she finds no sense of herself in any of these identities. Even though Ondine is usually the only who in private refers to her snidely as the Principal Beauty of Maine, Ondine also calls her "'the main bitch of the prince'" (29). In imploring Margaret for sexual favors, Valerian refers to her as "'Margie. Marge'" (163). The Italian Margarette was obviously reduced to the less ethnic Margaret which means "patron of women in childbirth" (Withycombe). Morrison uses this name ironically because Margaret physically abuses her only child, Michael, when he is young. Lauren Lepow notes that Margaret is

> endowed with some Marian attributes: her cross [her confirmation cross which Valerian's sister told her only whores wore], her simplicity and humble origins, her beauty so stunning that 'the moment [Valerian] saw her something inside him knelt down' . . . . (369)

However, Margaret is

> antithetical to the Christian Virgin, and the island's 'Mary's' . . . . Margaret is a very far from perfect mother, and the Marys may be judging her, among others, by their refusal to enter [her house]. Margaret nevertheless bears Valerian's only-begotten son, Michael, and she sees him as Christlike. (369)

Once again Morrison uses a biblical connection ironically. However, Margaret also comes from the Greek margarites which means pearl (Stewart). In her whiteness, her innocence, when Valerian sees her on the Snow Carnival float, she is like a pearl. To him she is a treasure, perhaps the biblical "one pearl of great price" (Matthew 13:46); if so, Morrison is still using irony because in the rest of the verse, the merchant sold all he had and bought the pearl. Of course, Valerian loses nothing financially when he marries Margaret. And as the years of marriage pass and especially after she confesses to the child abuse, Valerian may have felt that he had no pearl, no treasure. But after the confession, the Streets' positions in the household are reversed. He weakens and she gets stronger. When Jade returns from New York, Margaret is organizing Valerian's closet, and she cheerfully explains to Jade that she has to help Valerian now. "'Sometimes in the morning he can't do

anything he used to. You know: buttons, zippers. I have to tie his shoes even. Yesterday I washed his hair . . . " (240). She continues folding his clothes, "like a confident curator who knew the name of everything in his museum . . ." (240). She is a treasure again.

Street, Michael -- son of Valerian and Margaret Street. Michael is the character whose presence is felt throughout the novel but who never appears. His parents wait in vain for a promised Christmas visit; there is a sense that this is a pattern. When Margaret plans to leave with Michael following the proposed visit, Valerian tells her "'He doesn't care all that much for us, Margaret'" (22), but she believes it is only his father he does not care for. Almost thirty years old, Michael seems unable to settle in one place. In their conversation about Michael, Valerian makes a reference to the reservation where their son works, but Margaret tells him that the school closed, "'he's not with them anymore." Valerian's response is sarcastic, "'Oh? He's done the Hopis? Gone on to the Choctaws, I suppose. No, wait a minute. *C* comes before *H*. Let me see, Navajos?'" (22). The sarcasm is lost on Margaret, and she explains that Michael is now studying to be an environmental lawyer. Valerian seems exasperated :

> 'Well, why not? A band manager, shepherd, poet-in-residence, film producer, lifeguard ought to study law,

> the more environmental the better. An advantage really, since he's certainly had enough environments to choose from.' (23)

Michael is the name of an archangel, "patron of the Christian warrior" (Withycombe), but Michael is no warrior. As a child he was physically abused by his mother and though she believes he escaped unscathed by the incidents, it is obvious from his inability to focus, to know who he is, that her "physical abuse has damaged him, perhaps irreparably, and Michael's conspicuous absence throughout the novel's action is an emblem of failed redemption"; he is "'sacrificed,' too, as a direct result of Valerian's culpable innocence" (Lepow 369). Although he rarely visits, Michael's parents think of him often. When Son first arrives, Valerian sees Michael in him which is why the fugitive is allowed to remain on the island and not turned over to the police. Margaret tells Son that Michael is "beautiful, wise and kind. That he loved people, was not selfish, was actually self-sacrificing, committed . . . " (171). But their concern comes too late; Michael is never given the emotional or psychological weapons by which he can become a warrior, Christian or otherwise, in order to fight either parent. He chooses retreat over attack, which may be what keeps him sane or what keeps him from wreaking havoc. If Valerian is the creator of Eden and Margaret is a diminished Mary, then their only son Michael would certainly

be divine. However, in Michael, Morrison again uses the Bible to suggest but not undergird her characters.

Street, Valerian -- owner of Isle des Chevaliers and L'Arbre de la Croix, husband to Margaret, father to Michael. Valerian was born into a wealthy family that made its money from the manufacturing of candy. When he was seven, his father died and his uncles took over; "to show how much they loved and anticipated him . . ., they named a candy after him. *Valerians*. Red and white gumdrops in a red and white box . . . " (42). The candy was a flop; the sales reps told the uncles that it was "'faggoty'", that the only people who bought the candy were "'jigs'" (42-43) who lived in the South. In the scene where Son and Valerian exchange names, Son asks, "'You named after a candy?'" which indicates that as a Southern African American, he is familiar with Valerian long before he meets him. Valerian replies, "'The candy was named after me. I was named after an emperor'" (125-126). In this name exchange, Son gives Valerian his birth name, William Green, but not what he considers his true name, Son. With his emperor's name, Valerian would seem to win the "name game" as a power play. But the secret name is the stronger. With his long time but unknown awareness of Valerian/Valerians, Son's mythical qualities, whether son of Africa or son of God, come into play, and in Morrison, would always be superior. This name power game foreshadows

Valerian's eventual defeat. When Valerian bought Isle des Chevaliers and imported workers from Haiti, he attempts to create a paradise where he will reign as the benign ruler. However, that world is shattered when he learns that Maragaret had physically abused their child and realizes that because he knew nothing about it, he did not comfort his suffering son. After Margaret's confession, Valerian retreats to the greenhouse but does nothing. The island that he violated in order to form his own world eventually begins to reclaim its domain. He is reduced to invalid status with his wife and butler caring for him. Valerian's downfall was inherent in his name. He was named for

> Roman Emperor Valerian (253 C.E.), [who] although famous for his campaigns against the Persians, was eventually surrounded and captured by enemy horsemen and held prisoner for the rest of his life. (Lepow 368)

Valerian will probably be held prisoner in the greenhouse for the rest of his life by the knowledge of his inability to help his only son, by what Lepow calls his "culpable innocence" (369); he will also be surrounded by the blind horsemen since the imperial chevaliers of the myth Valerian believed in have been replaced just as the island's vegetation begins to replace what he had taken away when he bought the island. Like Oedipus, Valerian was destroyed by his pride, the pride that made him think he truly was emperor and creator. His surname is Street which could

imply that he would take the same path, the same way as his namesake.

CHAPTER VI

BELOVED

Beloved -- spirit of Sethe's murdered baby daughter. The baby "'wasn't even two years old when she died'" (4), but as soon as the gravestone with her name, Beloved, was erected, she made her presence known. The spirit is later exorcised by Paul D but reappears at the age that it would have been had it lived. Even though Beloved is carved on the headstone for the baby's grave, Beloved is not the child's name. There is no indication what her birth name is or if she had been named. Even though there seems to have been no history of delay in the other children's name, when Sethe finally reaches the safety of Baby Suggs' home, "Sethe's laugh of delight was so loud the crawling-already? baby blinked" (93); from that point until its death, the baby that is Beloved is the "crawling-already? baby." When it is time for the gravestone, Sethe chooses a name from the only two words she remembers hearing the minister say at the child's funeral, "Dearly Beloved." She exchanged ten minutes of sex with the stone engraver for the one word, Beloved.

> Ten minutes for seven letters. With another ten could she have gotten 'Dearly' too? She had not thought to ask him and it bothered her still that it might have

> been possible. . . . But what she got, settled for, was the one word that mattered. (5)

"Dearly Beloved" is the traditional opening of the wedding ceremony in the Christian church. However, "beloved" is "the translation of a number of words in the Bible" and at the funeral Rev. Pike could have used it in any number of ways. In the Old Testament it applies to a variety of things, among them "sexual love" (The Interpreter's Bible Dictionary) which could apply to Beloved's name since it was earned, exchanged, for sexual favors. A stronger case can be made for the association with sexual love in the relationship between Beloved and Paul D whom she has removed from her mother's house. She goes to him in the woodshed where she was killed. There she asks her mother's lover "'to touch me on the inside part and call me my name'"; she tells him, "'you have to touch me. On the inside part. And you have to call me my name.'" When he refuses, she pleads with him, promising to go if he will just call her name. He says, " 'Beloved.' . . . but she did not go" (117) and he made love to her. The girl is beloved by Sethe; before Beloved even appears, Sethe tells Denver that the baby's strength is "'no more powerful than the way I loved her'" (4). In Sethe's escape from Sweet Home, she sends her three children ahead of her to Baby Suggs. Through her ordeals of being captured, beaten, nursed by schoolteacher's two nephews, of having escaped again and of giving birth to

Denver in a boat, Sethe's primary concern is to get to her baby so she can nurse. After she is reunited with her children and they are threatened with a return to slavery, she attempts to save all four children from the life she has known by killing them but is only successful with one.

> . . . Beloved . . . takes her identity from the single word on her tombstone and from the love her mother bears her, the paradox of which is reflected in the novel's epigraph from *Romans* : 'I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.' (Rigney 41)

The novel ends with one word, her name, "Beloved." (275).

124 Bluestone Road -- Baby Suggs' address in Cincinnati, Ohio; home that the baby spirit haunted. The house belongs to the Bodwins, abolitionists, who allowed Baby Suggs to stay there "in return for laundry, some seamstress work, a little canning and so on (oh shoes, too) . . . " (145) after Halle has purchased her freedom from the Garners. That Baby Suggs is the ancestor figure found so often in Morrison's work is reflected in her home.

> . . . 124 had been a cheerful, buzzing house where Baby Suggs, holy, loved, cautioned, fed, chastised and soothed. Where not one but two pots simmered on the stove; where the lamp burned all night long. Strangers rested there while children tried on their shoes. Messages were left there, for whoever needed them was sure to stop in one day soon. (86-87)

Sethe finally arrives at 124 after she escapes from Sweet Home with the newborn Denver; there she is reunited with her other children and Baby Suggs nurses Sethe back to health. Throughout most of the novel, the house is referred to as 124 rather than by its full address.

> Morrison almost always selects numbers that are ascribed with magical powers; for example, one, three, seven and 22 which are associated with completion and creation . . . . Important addresses have the base number of seven such as . . . '124 Bluestone Road,' whose numbers total seven the number of creation (Samuels and Hudson Weem 135-36).

A new life is created for Sethe and her children on Bluestone Road. However, it lasts only twenty-eight days; twenty-eight days

> of healing, ease and real-talk. Days of company; knowing the names of forty, fifty other Negroes, their views, habits . . . . One taught her the alphabet; another a stitch. All taught her how it felt to wake up at dawn and *decide* what to do with the day. (95)

Samuels and Hudson-Weems explain that

> Drawing from astronomy, Morrison provides a lunar cycle, 28 days of happiness, as a trope for Sethe's freedom. Numerologically speaking this number's total is one (2 + 8 = 10; 1 + 0 = 1), a symbol of wholeness and completion; but it is also four times seven, suggestive of completeness and renewal. (136)

The cycle is at work in Sethe's life. At the end of Sethe's three weeks plus one day of freedom, the schoolteacher and the nephew come to reclaim her, to return her to a life of

slavery. However, Sethe kills one of her children and is sent to prison; her twenty-eight days of happiness are over. When she returns to Bluestone Road and the spirit baby's venom begins, the residents of 124 are isolated, so much so that Baby Suggs retires to her bed and dies. Sethe lives in this isolation for sixteen years. Then Paul D and Beloved arrive; Beloved takes over and Paul D moves to the church; then Beloved disappears and Paul D returns to comfort Sethe who is in Baby Suggs bed, ready to give up. But Paul D tells her, "'Sethe,' . . . 'me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow.'" Sethe had told him that Beloved was her best thing, but he assures her that "'You your best thing, Sethe. You are.'" She asks, "' Me? Me?'" (273). In this exchange we see the completion and renewal of the cycle that began with Sethe's arrival at 124, her twenty-eight days of happiness, her years of isolation and now the return of love. The creation inherent in seven (1 + 2 + 4) is implied in Paul D and Sethe's new love. However, the numerals are not the only significant part of the address. Bluestone is "a bluish-gray sandstone used for paving and building" (The American Heritage Dictionary). At the end of the novel, Paul D and Sethe are in the early stages of building a new life. However, Morrison's "notion that colors have symbolic powers and characteristics of their own" (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 136) cannot be ignored. Baby Suggs explains to Stamp Paid

that she plans to take to her bed and "fix on something harmless in this world." When he responds that there is nothing harmless on earth, she tells him "'Yes it is. Blue. That don't hurt nobody . . . . '" (179). When that explanation of blue is juxtaposed with the implied hardness of stone, Morrison could be predicting the ongoing cycles of life at 124 Bluestone Road.

Bodwins, the -- abolitionists, Scots, brother and sister who are kind to Baby Suggs and her family. When Baby Suggs came to town, the Bodwins put her in their grandparents' home in exchange for work; when Sethe killed her baby, they helped her legally; years later, when Denver leaves 124 to find help, the Bodwins give her a job. I could not find Bodwin in a dictionary of Scottish names. However, the Scottish noun "bod" is defined as "personal invitation; a price bidden or asked" and "'new bod, new shod,' fresh, with renewed effort." The adjective "boden, bodden" indicates "arrayed, prepared, furnished with" (Scots Dictionary). As abolitionists, the Bodwins, through their generous efforts, extend an invitation of freedom to any slave. The price "bidden or asked" of Baby Suggs is work in exchange for a house. It is obvious through all their actions to benefit Baby Suggs, Sethe and Denver that the Bodwins are willing to give their African-American neighbors a fresh start and furnish them with whatever is necessary. The Bodwins also

pay a personal price as abolitionists which the incidents of Edward Bodwin being called "bleached nigger" demonstrate.

Brother -- a tree. After Paul D comes to 124 and sleeps with Sethe, he sees the scars on her back from the beating one of the nephews gave her. Sethe obviously tells Paul D that Amy Denver said the scars looked like a tree. To himself he concedes that it may be shaped like a tree

> but nothing like any tree he knew because trees were inviting; things you could trust and be near; talk to if you wanted to as he frequently did since way back when he took the midday meal in the fields of Sweet Home. . . . choosing had been hard because Sweet Home had more pretty trees than any farm around. His choice he called Brother . . . . (21)

Because Paul D also tried to escape when Sethe did, schoolteacher sold him. Before he left Sweet Home, Paul D "turned his head, aiming for a last look at Brother, turned it as much as the rope that connected his neck to the axle of a buckboard allowed . . . " (107). It is not surprising that a slave cannot turn to another human to "trust and be near; talk to" or that he has no one to have one last look at before he goes to another owner. There is certainly no trust to be found in any white slave holder. Any slave friend can be sold at any time, and for that reason, Paul D cannot even turn to his actual brothers, Paul A and Paul F, who live on the farm. Therefore, when some object becomes something that can be trusted and talked to, it is not

surprising that it receives a name that connotes a close,desired relationship, even a blood kinship. In another context it might be considered ironic that the object is living but not human but that is not the case in a Morrison world that would contain an African heritage of feeling kinship with nature.

Buddy, Mr. and Mrs. _____ -- Amy Denver worked for them, left for Boston to seek her concept of a perfect piece of velvet. When the two runaways, Amy and Sethe, meet they have their suffering in common. Amy explains that "'My mama worked for these here people to pay for her passage. But then she had me and since she died right after, well, they said I had to work for em to pay it off. I did . . . '" (33). Even though she is white, Amy describes the hard work that she has to do and when she does not do it, she is punished. Sethe tells Denver when she first sees Amy that she is "'the raggediest-looking trash you ever saw'" who looked as if "she needed beef and pot liquor like nobody in this world" (31, 32). Amy explains to Sethe that she "'used to be a good size. Nice arms and everything. Wouldn't think it, would you? That was before they put me in the root cellar'" (34). After Amy is struck almost speechless by Sethe's back, where the nephew whipped her, she tells Sethe that "'I had me some whippings, but I don't remember nothing like this. Mr. Buddy had a right evil hand too. Whip you for

looking at him straight. Sure would . . . . '" (79). With the exception of the Streets in Tar Baby, Morrison's whites are almost faceless, incidental characters even though the indirect presence of the white culture is strongly felt. But in this novel, the cruelty, even the evil of the white Mr. Buddy, the schoolteacher, the nephews and the prison guards is palpable. Of the three, only Mr. Buddy, who appears to punish the white Amy in the same manner as other owners punished their slaves, is named. Morrison may be implying that the cruelty of whites does not stop with their treatment of slaves and, therefore, she makes his name, which connotes friendship, suspect--just as suspect as most African Americans in Morrison's works treat whites.

Buffalo Men -- escaped convicts. Because Paul D tries to kill his new owner after he leaves Sweet Home, he is sent to prison in Alfred, Georgia. He and the other men he is chained to escape during a rain storm.

> They were hoping for a shack, solitary, some distance from its big house, where a slave might be making rope or heating potatoes at the grate. What they found was a camp of sick Cherokee. . . . Decimated but stubborn, they were among those who chose a fugitive life rather than Oklahoma. (111)

The escapees are ignored until Hi Man raises his hand. "The Cherokee saw the chains and went away. When they returned each carried a handful of small axes. Two children followed

with a pot of mush cooling and thinning in the rain" (112). The Cherokees call the escapees Buffalo men and cut off the chains as they tell them stories of other Buffalo men who live in the nearby camp of the healthy Cherokee. The name probably comes from the escapees' dirty, shaggy appearance; these are men who have lived chained together in cages in a ditch and had escaped death from a mudslide. The Cherokee mean no disrespect to the men in calling them Buffalo men since the buffalo is such an important part of their lives. In fact, when the Cherokee respond not to the men but to the *chained* men, Morrison provides a connection between the sick Cherokee who have rejected life on the government's reservations and the escapees. Both groups have been victims of the white man's political systems and both have, temporarily at least, escaped.

Clearing, the -- a special place in the woods for the African Americans in Baby Suggs' neighborhood. After she arrives on Bluestone Road and her home is open to all, Baby Suggs "became an unchurched preacher" who will visit different churches during the cold months. But when spring comes,

> Baby Suggs, holy, followed by every black man, woman and child who could make it through, took her great heart to the Clearing--a wide-open place cut deep in the woods nobody knew for what at the end of a path known only to deer and whoever cleared the land in the first place. (87)

Sitting on a huge flat-sided rock, obviously altar-like, she prays silently and then calls her followers forward in groups--children, men, then the women:

> It started that way: laughing children, dancing men, crying women and then it got mixed up. Women stopped crying and danced; men sat down and cried; children danced, women laughed, children cried until, exhausted and riven, all and each lay about the Clearing damp and gasping for breath. In the silence that followed, Baby Suggs, holy, offered up to them her great big heart. (89)

The Clearing is named for what it literally is, land cleared of trees and brush. However, it becomes a place of mystery since it is deep in the woods and no one knows how or why the land was cleared, and it becomes a special place when Baby Suggs is there. What she asks of her followers in the Clearing is to exchange the hate the white world has for them for the love that they must feel for themselves.

> 'Here . . . in this here place, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laugh; flesh that dances on bare feet in grass. Love it. Love it hard. Yonder they do not love your flesh. They despise it. They don't love your eyes; they'd just as soon pick em out. No more do they love the skin on your back. Yonder they flay it (88),

and she encourages them to love their hands, mouths, feet, backs, necks, livers, lungs. "More than your life-holding womb and your life-giving private parts, hear me now, love your heart. For this is the prize" (89). This exchange of hate for love suggests another definition of clearing, of

"the exchange among banks of checks, drafts, and notes and the settlement of differences arising from it" (The American Heritage Dictionary).

Denver, Amy -- girl who saves Sethe's life. After Sethe is whipped by the nephew, she finally eludes the schoolteacher and heads to Ohio, to get to her sons and the nursing baby that needs her. She collapses in the woods, pregnant, in pain from the beating and her feet "so swollen [Sethe] could not see her arch or feel her ankles. Her leg shaft ended in a loaf of flesh scalloped by five toenails" (29-30). Lying on the ground, fully expecting that she and her unborn baby will die, she hears something. Instead of the white man Sethe expects, it is Amy Denver who tells Sethe that she is headed for Boston to buy velvet because that is where the finest velvet can be found. But Amy Denver stops her trip long enough to save Sethe's life. She massages Sethe's swollen feet, makes her some shoes from Sethe's shawl, delivers Sethe's baby in a rowboat as they cross the river, and then continues her trip. Amy's given name is from the Old French *amee* "'beloved'" (Stewart) and *aimee*, the past participle of the Modern French verb *aimer*, "to love" (Withycombe). To love may be too strong a word for Amy and Sethe's relationship, but Amy was indeed a friend to Sethe because without Amy, Sethe and her baby would have died. There are very few mixed race friendships in Morrison's

work; this one between Amy and Sethe becomes special when one of the partner's names means love, and perhaps by implication, friend. Morrison also connects the two women by clearly pointing out their similarities.

> A patroller passing would have sniggered to see two throw-away people, two lawless outlaws--a slave and a barefoot whitewoman with unpinned hair--wrapping a ten-minute-old baby in the rags they wore. (84-85)

But Morrison does not allow us to forget that Sethe is a runaway slave and like Huck at one point, Amy "wouldn't be caught dead in daylight on a busy river with a runaway" (85). Morrison perhaps hints with Amy's name that interracial friendships might be possible but not probable. Carolyn A. Mitchell argues that Amy is not only Christ but also the Good Samaritan. She contends that Amy "is irreversibly linked to black life, both through her own suffering and through her surname, Denver . . . " (32, 33). Mitchell does not explain her reference to Denver either in her text or in a content note. She could be alluding to James William Denver, who was governor of the Kansas Territory (1858) following the aftermath of John Brown's "massacre at Potawatomie," the period known as "Bleeding Kansas"; this upheaval was precipitated by the expansion of slavery in general and the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854) in particular (The American People 478-79). However, with Amy headed to Boston but with the surname Denver, Morrison could

be setting up an East/West contrast to mirror the black/white relationship, since the women are headed in different directions and by implication, different lives.

Garner, Mr. and Mrs. _____ -- owned Sweet Home and the slaves who worked there. On their farm (see Sweet Home) the Garners held slaves but treated them well--telling them that they were men, allowing them to keep guns, listening to them, giving some of them Garner as a surname, never beating them. The Garners' treatment of their slaves was obviously the exception to the rule in their community. The surname Garner is English, a "topographic name for someone who lived near a barn or granary, or metonymic occupational name for someone in charge of the stores kept in a granary" (Hanks and Hodges Surnames). The Oxford English Dictionary defines garner as "a storehouse for salt"; "to store or lay up, to put away." True to their names, the Garners have "stored" their slaves which are a human commodity, a crop, regardless of how well they were treated. This is evident when the schoolteacher arrives and treats them as they had been treated by other white owners; he does not acknowledge that they are special in any way as Mr. Garner had done. The association of garner as "storehouse for salt" also suggests "the African myth . . . that black people could fly until they ate salt, introduced by the white man" (Jones 172). Mr. Garner tries to give his men the illusion of having

wings but they become salt-eaters nonetheless. He gives them guns, his name, and a life without violence, but he never gave them their freedom which would have allowed them to metaphorically fly. This novel is based on the story of Margaret Garner who

> attempted to kill her children rather than have them reenslaved when they were all captured in Ohio in 1850. She succeeded in killing only one, however, whose throat she slashed. (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 95)

Morrison has ironically woven the Garner name into the novel as the name of the slave holders rather than the slave.

Garner, Paul D -- once owned by Mr. Garner, becomes Sethe's lover. Paul D tried to escape after schoolteacher made life at Sweet home unbearable, was sold, and when he tried to kill his new owner, he was put on the chain gang in Alfred, Georgia. When he and his fellow convicts escaped, they were saved by sick Cherokees. Following a Cherokee's instructions to follow the tree flowers to find the North, Paul D found Sethe eighteen years after they both had left Sweet Home. His final experiences there and since have hardened him, and he has put those experiences, "one by one, into the tobacco tin lodged in his chest. By the time he got to 124 nothing in this world could pry it open" (113). Wilfred D. Samuels and Clenora Hudson-Weems make the point that "biblically, Paul denotes small; moreover, Paul D lacks

a surname--that is, history and family--and must share his first name with his two brothers, implying anonymity" (125). Because he leaves Sethe when he discovers that she killed her child, this assessment of Paul D as small is somewhat accurate. He has survived slavery, imprisonment, years of travel and hardship, and cannot allow Sethe or anyone else into his rusted tin of a heart. His question to Stamp Paid, "'How much is a nigger supposed to take? Tell me. How much?'" (235), implies that he is obviously at the point of thinking that he can take no more, that life has given him all he can handle,unless, perhaps, he has the help of the bottle of wine. At this point he is, like the biblical Saul that his name suggests, metaphorically blind and cannot see beyond his own pain. He may have remained blind if, again like his namesake, he had not had a life-changing experience. For Paul D, this comes when he moves away from his own suffering and attempts to save Sethe's life. At 124 he finds Sethe in Baby Suggs' bed, the bed Baby Suggs took to when she decided to die. Remembering his experiences with Sethe, Paul D realizes that "only this woman Sethe could have left him his manhood like that. He wants to put his story next to hers" and tells her "'You your best thing, Sethe. You are.' His holding fingers are holding hers" (273). In this acknowledgement and act of love, Paul D becomes a new man, just as the biblical Saul was transformed into Paul, who became "perhaps the most important and

creative figure in the history of the early Church" (Hanks and Hodges First Names). The Pauline doctrine is based on love of Christ and love of the Church; Paul D's new life is based on the love of a woman. Morrison again uses the Bible to suggest but not to emulate. At Sweet Home Paul D was one of three brothers, each named Paul with only their initials -- Paul D, Paul A, Paul F-- to differentiate between them. These names suggest that the one who named them, in all probability an owner, does not see them as individuals. However, Paul D finds himself, becomes the man that Garner had always called him, when he discovers that he can live for someone else. The surname Garner obviously comes from his owners, Mr. and Mrs. Garner. The association of garner with storing can apply to Paul D when he learns to store love in the rusty tobacco tin of his heart.

Here Boy -- the dog that lives at 124 Bluestone Road. He is introduced casually as Sethe notices that without any warning, something will remind her of Sweet Home, such as "Here Boy lapping in the puddle near her feet" (6). Morrison creates a loyal dog that can survive the baby venom of 124:

> . . . the baby's spirit picked up Here Boy and slammed him into the wall hard enough to break two of his legs and dislocate his eye, so hard he went into convulsions and chewed up his tongue. . . . [Sethe] had taken a hammer, knocked the dog unconscious, wiped away the blood and saliva, pushed his eye back in his head and set his leg bones. He recovered, mute and

> off-balance, more because of his untrustworthy eye than his bent legs, and . . . nothing could persuade him to enter the house again. (12)

The baby spirit did not totally defeat or run him off. However, when Paul D, Denver and Sethe return from the carnival to find Beloved, the manifestation of the baby spirit, on a stump, "Here Boy [was] nowhere in sight" (51). As long as Beloved remains at 124, Here Boy stays gone. When Paul D comes to see Sethe after she has taken to Baby Suggs' bed, "Here Boy, feeble and shedding his coat in patches, is asleep by the pump, so Paul D knows Beloved is truly gone" (263). With Here Boy, Morrison turns to the widely held folk belief that animals can sense the presence of a ghost and he becomes a way of validating Beloved's ghostliness; he is "here" only when the ghost is not. His name can be a touch of humor in a novel full of sorrow. It also implies that the folk at 124 will call him, perhaps to feed him, but he does not warrant any time spent on a more formal name.

Hi Man -- fellow chain-gang member with Paul D. Each morning in Alfred, Georgia, the prisoners leave their cages in the trench, kneel and perform fellatio on any of the three white guards that demand it. This ritual continues until one prisoner yells, "'Hiiii!'" which

> was the first sound, other than 'Yes, sir' a blackman was allowed to speak each morning, and the lead chain gave it everything he had. . . . It was never clear to Paul D how he knew when to shout that mercy. (108)

The lead chain's name is Hi Man and when Paul D first came to Alfred, he thought the guards somehow signalled him when it was time for his call. However, he later believes that the morning call and "the 'Hoooo!' when evening came were the responsibility Hi Man assumed because he alone knew what was enough, what was too much, when things were over, when the time had come" (108). Hi Man is also responsible for saving the other forty-five prisoners when the mudslide almost kills them.

> The ditch was caving in and mud oozed under and through the bars. . . . One by one, from Hi Man back on down the line, they dove. . . . The chain that held them would save all or none, and Hi Man was the Delivery. [They all emerged from the mud and] like the unshriven dead, zombies on the loose, holding the chains in their hands, they trusted the rain and the dark, yes, but mostly Hi Man and each other. (110)

After their escape, all forty-six are still connected by the chain when they finally come to a group of sick Cherokee who ignore them. "At dawn two men with barnacles covering their beautiful skin approached them. No one spoke, for a moment, then Hi Man raised his hand" (112). Having seen the chain, the Cherokee then bring saws and food; the prisoners are saved. Through his omniscience--knowing when to stop the guards--and his actions, especially his mercy call, Hi Man

functions as a savior, "the Delivery," for the prisoners, and with the suggestion of High Man, Morrison creates a God-like figure.

Jones, Lady -- schoolteacher. When Denver was seven years old, she went to Lady Jones' house where for a nickel she would spend two hours a day learning to spell and count. "Lady Jones did what whitepeople thought unnecessary if not illegal: crowded her little parlor with the colored children who had time for and interest in book learning" (102). For a year Denver enjoyed going to Lady Jones's home, but she stopped attending when one of the children asked her about Sethe, herself, and prison. When Denver knows she must leave 124 for help because there is no food and her mother is wasting away, even though it has been twelve years, "the way came back" (245) and she goes to Lady Jones for help.

> Lady Jones was mixed. Gray eyes and yellow woolly hair, every strand of which she hated--though whether it was the color or the texture even she didn't know. She had married the blackest man she could find, had five rainbow-colored children and sent them all to Wilberforce, after teaching them all she knew right along with the others who sat in her parlor. Her light skin got her picked for a coloredgirls' normal school in Pennsylvania and she paid it back teaching the unpicked. . . . She had been listening to "all that yellow gone to waste' and 'white nigger' since she was a girl in a houseful of silt-black children . . . . (247)

Even though Lady Jones is unable to provide Denver with the paying job she needs, two days after Denver visits her, food begins to appear at 124 from the neighborhood church women. Because her siblings were "silt-black children" and she has blond woolly hair, it is probable that Lady Jones's mother was an African-American and her father white. If her father were prosperous and perhaps her mother's owner, her mother may have named the child Lady in anticipation that this light skinned daughter might have a better life than she. Her mother is not following a common naming practice of the time with Lady because "slave women in the nineteenth century use titular names at a rate of .37 per cent"; common titular names were Nanny, Queen, Granny, Senior and Madame. "Free Black women employ Nanny . . . . Titular names, then are generally avoided by Blacks . . . " (Puckett 53). Lady Jones's teaching the "unpicked" children and her quick marshalling of the neighborhood women to feed Sethe's family suggest Lady Bountiful. Morrison might also be favorably contrasting the racially mixed Lady who cares for these needy children to the white unnamed schoolteacher who treats the slaves at Sweet Home so cruelly. When Morrison draws attention to Lady's gold hair and writes that "[S]he disliked everybody a little bit because she believed they hated her hair as much as she did" (247), perhaps Morrison slyly suggests Lady Godiva, another rare example of humor in her naming. Lady's married name is Jones, the most popular

> of the fifty-three most frequently used surnames by these Blacks freed in 1864 in Washington, D.C. in terms of Southern free Blacks, Southern Whites and all free Blacks in the United States between 1800 and 1860. (Puckett 65)

Lord, Nelson -- schoolmate of Denver's at Lady Jones's home. Denver's joy of learning and of going to Lady Jones's "school" comes to an abrupt end when Nelson Lord asked her, "'Didn't your mother get locked away for murder? Wasn't you in there with her when she went?'" (104). These were questions Denver had wanted to ask her mother, but "she went deaf rather than hear the answer . . . " (105). Denver lived in silence for two years, emerging when she heard the "crawling already? baby's" spirit try to climb the stairs at 124. It is twelve years later before she sees Nelson Lord again; he casually and thoughtfully says, "'Take care of yourself, Denver.' . . . The last time he spoke to her his words blocked up her ears. Now they opened her mind. . . . she plotted what to do and how" (252). Because of her former classmate's words, Denver decides to seek help from the Bodwins, who give her a job. The chain of events that began with Nelson Lord's words eventually save Sethe from the ghost daughter bent on reclaiming and destroying her. Such a major victory might suggests Morrison's intention that Nelson Lord be read as Lord Nelson, the eighteenth century British naval hero.

Lu -- alias Sethe uses. After Sethe finally escapes from Sweet Home, she is lying in the woods, on the verge of giving birth and in pain from the nephew's beating. Amy Denver stumbles upon her and asks, "'What they call you?'" Even though she has traveled some distance from Sweet Home, "there was no point in giving out her real name to the first person she saw. 'Lu,' said Sethe. 'They call me Lu'" (33), a name that Amy never learns is a false one. While she is talking to Amy, Sethe is still lying on the ground, "down in the grass, like the snake she believed she was . . . " (32). When Amy walks off, expecting Sethe to follow, she draws attention to Sethe's remaining on the ground; "'what you gonna do, just lay there and foal?'" (33). This comment recalls what Sethe had once heard the teacher tell his pupils about her. "'No, no. That's not the way. I told you to put her human characteristics on the left; her animal ones on the right . . .'" (193). Sethe does not understand his intent until she asks Mrs. Garner to explain "characteristic." When Sethe renames herself, she chooses a short, one syllable name, which supports the practice that "the slave diminutive in being short and terse, [was] designed rather for property than personal distinction" (Puckett 11). Amy easily accepts the name; in Black Names in America, Lue (phonetically indistinguishable from Lu) is listed as the second most frequently used female slave name in the 1700-1800 list. It could also be a diminutive since

the Lu-form is part of 43 names in the Index of unusual female names and part of 15 female names in the "Dictionary of African Origin" (Puckett 545, 412-13).

Mister -- the rooster at Sweet Home. When Paul D is sold away from Sweet Home, a metal bit is placed in his mouth, just as one might put a bit in a horse's mouth. To him this is not the final degradation but walking in front of the roosters and hens, especially Mister, is. It was Paul D who had taken Mister out of his shell when the hen had walked away; he tells Sethe he saw the egg "'move so I tapped it open and here come Mister, bad feet and all. I watched that son a bitch grow up and whup everything in the yard.'" Mister seems to have whipped Paul D, too. As Paul D walks by with the bit in his mouth, he is thinking about Halle and Six-O, not himself. The he sees Mister; "'I swear he smiled.'" Then Paul D realizes how far the Sweet Home men had fallen since Garner's death--"'one crazy, one sold, one missing, one burnt and me licking iron with my hands crossed behind me. The last of the Sweet Home men '" (72). The final blow is his realization that Mister "'looked so . . . free. Better than me. Stronger, tougher'" and that

> 'Mister was allowed to be and stay what he was. But I wasn't allowed to be and stay what I was. Even if you cooked him you'd be cooking a rooster named Mister. But wasn't no way I'd ever be Paul D again, living or dead. Schoolteacher changed me. I was something else

> and that something was less than a chicken sitting in the sun on a tub.' (72)

As a slave, he is given the name Paul, following the common practice of giving slaves biblical names; he is D to distinguish him from his brothers, also slaves, Paul A and Paul F; he is Garner because that is the surname of his owner. All the components of his name reflect slave status, and Mr. is never considered a part of his name. In the novel he is only referred to as Mr. twice, both times by Denver. When he first comes to 124, Sethe introduces him to her daughter as "Paul D . . . from Sweet Home"; Denver politely responds, "Good morning, Mr. D,'" assuming D is Dee, a surname. But he corrects her, "'Garner, baby. Paul D Garner'" (11), thereby fully accepting his slave name, perhaps still feeling "less than a chicken." However, Paul D grows emotionally throughout the novel and when he offers Sethe a life of tomorrows, he is not the same man who first walked up to 124. This is acknowledged when Denver, after Beloved has left, meets him on the street and offers him the same greeting, "'Good morning, Mr.D'" (266). This time Paul D accepts the name because he is his own man now, and probably in his own mind, is stronger, better, and freer than the rooster that sits in a tub in the sun. The name of the white slave owner is gone. When Morrison has a white character assign a farm animal a name of respect that is

denied a fellow human being, an African American, she makes her point about the evils of slavery quite clearly.

Nan -- slave woman Sethe knew as a child. Sethe barely knew and rarely saw her own mother

> who was pointed out to her by the eight-year-old child who watched over the young ones--pointed out as the one among many backs turned away from her, stooping in a watery field. Patiently Sethe waited for this particular back to gain the row's end and stand. What she saw was a cloth hat as opposed to a straw one, singularity enough in that world of cooing women each of whom was called Ma'am. (30)

Sethe explains to Beloved that she

> 'didn't see her [mother] but a few times out in the fields and once when she was working indigo. By the time I woke up in the morning, she was in line. . . . Sunday she slept like a stick. She must of nursed me two or three weeks--that the way the others did. Then she went back in rice and I sucked from another woman whose job it was.' (60)

Sethe's mother's distance from her daughter is also indicated by her lack of a name. Instead, she tells her daughter that if anything happens to her and Sethe cannot identify her face, that Sethe is to look for the mark her mother has under her breast. When her mother is hanged, it

> 'was the woman called Nan who took [Sethe's] hand and yanked her away from the pile before she could make out the mark. Nan was the one she knew best, who was around all day, who nursed babies, cooked, had one good arm and half of another ' (62),

and it is Nan who tells Sethe where her name came from. From her role as caregiver, it seems more likely that her name is a diminutive of Nanny rather than a diminutive of Nancy. "Titular names were employed . . . by female slaves at a rate of .65 per cent . . . . Slave females were restricted to titular names reflecting familial roles [such as] Nanny . . . " (Puckett 16). The crippled Nan (nanny, substitute mother) is left to cook, tend and nurse children whose mothers are being worked so hard and so long that their children may not even know their faces or their names. Together, Sethe's unnamed mother and her surrogate, Nan, are two of Morrison's strongest indictments of the dehumanization of slavery.

nephews, the -- the two boys who come to Sweet Home with schoolteacher. Sethe is unclear of the exact relationship of the boys to the schoolteacher; she tells Denver that he "brought two boys with him. Sons or nephews. I don't know. They called him Onka and had pretty manners, all of em" (36-37). Just before her escape, the nephews grab the pregnant Sethe in the barn, and as she tells Paul D, "one suck[s] on my breast the other holding me down, their book-reading teacher watching and writing it up" (70). When the schoolteacher discovers that Sethe tells Mrs. Garner what happened, he has one of the nephews beat her. Sethe escapes

soon after; as punishment, the nephew who beat Sethe is unable to join in the hunt for her because he had

> overbeat her and made her cut and run. Schoolteacher had chastised that nephew, telling him to think--just think--what would his own horse do if you beat it beyond the point of education. (149)

The nephews, whom Margaret Atwood labels "sadistic and repulsive" (145), are never named and are interchangeable until one of them beats Sethe; he then is the one who is punished. The word "nephew" is never capitalized, demonstrating Morrison's utter disdain for the whites that treat other humans like animals. They are unworthy of a name.

schoolteacher -- man who comes to Sweet Home after Mr. Garner dies. Sethe tells Denver that

> he was a little man. Short. Always wore a collar, even in the fields. A schoolteacher [Mrs. Garner] said. That made her feel good that her husband's sister's husband had book learning and was willing to come farm Sweet Home after Mr. Garner passed. (36)

Once schoolteacher comes to the farm, everything changes for the Sweet Home men and Sethe. He studies them as one studies an unusual specimen and records his observations in his book. According to Sethe,

> It was a book about us but we didn't know that right away. We just thought it was his manner to ask us

> questions. He commenced to carry round a notebook and write down what we said. (37)

He taught the nephews their lessons each day; "he'd talk and they'd write" (193). It was during one of these lessons that Sethe heard the schoolteacher tell the nephews to list both Sethe's human characteristics and her animal ones, which indicates his attitudes toward the slaves at Sweet Home. The nephews were not his only pupils. The men on the farm quickly learned that the benevolent treatment they had always received from the Garners was not true of all whites. Mr. Garner had called them men and treated them as such, listening to their ideas, letting them carry guns, never beating them. All this changed with the schoolteacher's arrival; he taught them to understand exactly what slave status meant when their guns were taken away, when they were watched constantly, when Paul F was sold and Paul A was beaten. It was the schoolteacher's treatment that eventually led the Sweet Home men and Sethe to escape. When the schoolteacher finds Sethe in Ohio, it was the knowledge of what life under his rule would be like that caused Sethe to try to kill her four children. Margaret Atwood writes that

> this Goebbels-like paragon combines viciousness with intellectual pretensions; he's a sort of master-race proponent who measures the heads of the slaves and tabulates the results to demonstrate that they are more like animals than people. (144)

Like the nephews, the schoolteacher remains unnamed and the first letter of his label is lower case. In this way, Morrison links him to the unnamed, brutal guards who abuse the African-American prisoners in Alfred, Georgia. In making him an educated man, she broadens her condemnation of the white race to show that the brute was not the only one to victimize the slaves.

Sixo -- one of the Sweet Home men. Sixo tried to escape at the same time as all the other Sweet Home slaves. He and Paul D are both captured; however, Paul D is not killed or even severely punished because he is a commodity worth $900 and can be sold. But the schoolteacher decides that Sixo "will never be suitable" (226), and he is tied to a tree and set on fire.

> By the light of the hominy fire Sixo straightens. He is through with his song. He laughs. . . . His feet are cooking; the cloth of his trousers smokes. He laughs. Something is funny. Paul D guesses what it is when Sixo interrupts his laughter to call out, 'Seven-O! Seven-O!.' Smoky, stubborn fire. They shoot him to shut him up. Have to. (226)

Sixo (6-0) is shouting his triumph over the white man because the Thirty-Mile Woman is pregnant with their child, who will be Seven-0 (7-0). Sixo was probably named before coming to Sweet Home because the Garners would never have given one of their slaves a number for a name. Whoever

owned/named Sixo obviously considered him as an object, a possession, as only the number 6-0, and probably listed him as such in any form of record keeping. With Sixo, Morrison is demonstrating an attitude she believes some white owners had toward slaves, that they are not human, not individual enough to receive a name. However, she aligns herself with the slave when she uses a word for the name rather than the original numeral.

Stamp Paid -- man who helps Sethe to freedom after her escape and Denver's birth. He is "agent, fisherman, boatman, tracker, savior, spy" (136); the man who is there when schoolteacher comes for Sethe and the one who saves Denver's life; the man who carries Baby Suggs from the house when she dies; the one who causes Paul D's departure from 124 after he shows Paul D the newspaper clipping about Sethe's murder of Beloved.

> Before the War all he did was sneak: runaways into hidden places, secret information to public places. Underneath his legal vegetables were the contraband humans that he ferried across the river. Even the pigs he worked in the spring served his purposes. Whole families lived on the bones and guts he distributed to them. He wrote their letters and read to them the ones they received. (169-70)

However, he is afraid that he has gone too far in telling Paul D about Sethe. He is concerned that

> after all these years of clarity, he had misnamed himself and there was yet another debt he owned. Born Joshua, he renamed himself when he handed over his wife to his master's son. Handed her over in the sense that he did not kill anybody, thereby himself, because his wife demanded he stay alive. Otherwise, she reasoned, where and to who could she return when the boy was through? With that gift, he decided that he didn't owe anybody anything. Whatever his obligations were, that act paid them off. (184-85)

With this he became Stamp Paid, a man who owed no one anything. As Stamp Paid, both in name and in attitude, he turned to helping other people. "He ferried them and rendered them paid for; gave them their own bill of sale, so to speak. 'You paid it; now life owes you'" (185).

> He took control of his life by aborting his slave name, Joshua, which means 'Jehovah is salvation,' and took the name 'Stamp Paid,' indicating his liberation and his sense of being debt free. No one else was responsible for his salvation. . . . Stamp Paid acted to chart the direction of his own life in the significant rite of naming and sacrificing himself for others, acted to benefit others in sacrificing himself. (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 133)

Stamp Paid's name becomes a paradigm for post-slavery African Americans: the debt has been paid for two hundred years of suffering, the white man's Bible and his naming from it have been rejected as inadequate, the African American can take control of his/her life and one major way of doing this is by renaming himself/herself. Such renaming signified the removal of the yoke of oppression.

Suggs, Baby -- Halle's mother; Sethe's mother-in-law; Beloved, Denver, Howard, and Buglar's grandmother. One of Morrison's venerated ancestors, the freed Baby Suggs and her home at 124 Bluestone Road become the center of the African-American community which she "loved, cautioned, fed, chastised, and soothed" (87). She cared not only for their physical needs but also for their souls as she talked to them in the Clearing. Because of her ministering she is called Baby Suggs, holy, "accepting no title of honor before her name, but allowing a small caress after it . . . " (87). When Sethe is ready to escape, she sends her children on to Baby Suggs and finally is taken there herself by Stamp Paid. Baby Suggs has cared for her grandchildren and nurses her daughter-in-law back to health, still the "Morrisonian earth mother" (Samuels and Hudson-Weems 116). Baby Suggs has several names. In Tar Baby, two names often indicated a fragmented, weakened character. But this is not applicable to Baby Suggs; instead the names demonstrate the nurturing facets of her personality. To Sethe who knew her at Sweet Home, she is Baby Suggs; to the community that she ministers to, she is Baby Suggs, holy; to Denver, the granddaughter who seeks comfort from her in a haunted house, she is Grandma Baby; to the Garners, for whom she is a house slave, she is Jenny. Since she never understood why Mrs. Garner referred to her as Jenny, she asked Mr. Garner once she was freed. He answers, "'Cause that what's on your sales

ticket, gal. Ain't that your name? What you call yourself?'" [see Dead, Macon in Song of Solomon] She replies, "'I don't call myself nothing'". Such a comment reflects the dehumanizing effect of slavery in the same way the use of 6-0 as a name does. Mr. Garner explains that he bought her from Whitlow who "'called you Jenny and Jenny Whitlow is what his bill said.'" She tells him that she goes by Suggs, her "husband's" name even though she was only married in a "'manner of speaking'" (142). However, this man was not Halle's father even though Halle too goes by Suggs. When she explains that her husband called her Baby, Mr. Garner advises her to stick "'to Jenny Whitlow. Mrs. Baby Suggs ain't no name for a freed Negro.'" However, for Baby, that name is all she has left of her husband, and she keeps it because when he comes looking for her, "how could he find or hear tell of her if she was calling herself some bill-of-sale name?" (142). According to Black Names in America, Jenny is a common slave name since it is found on lists of slave names in the seventeenth and freed slaves in the eighteenth centuries (26, 31); her surname comes directly from her owner, a common practice. Jenny is also the name of a female donkey, another mark of slave status. Even though she inherits her owner's surname, it too becomes an indication of slave status when one separates the elements into 'whit' which means "the least bit" (The American Heritage Dictionary) and 'low.' But her husband's

name for her overrides the slave name and more clearly defines her character. Baby is probably an endearment, a nickname lovingly bestowed because she is never childish which would have indicated that the name might be a derisive one. Instead, Baby Suggs, holy, is the rock that others depend upon; for the most part, she is as steadfast as the rock she sits on in the Clearing. Suggs is English, "dweller at the sign of the sow; one with some characteristics of a female hog" (Smith 1973). Since a sow is a female, the name Suggs suggests the nourishment Baby Suggs, holy, provides for the community and for her family through her care for their bodies and their souls.

Suggs, Buglar -- one of Sethe's sons. From the first paragraph of the first page of the novel, Morrison lists the people who have deserted 124 Bluestone Road. Baby Suggs has died and Sethe's two sons, Buglar and Howard, have run away. Each boy had left by the time he was thirteen, "as soon as merely looking in a mirror shattered it (that was the signal for Buglar)" (3). The mirror is obviously the final straw for the young boy. As a child, he and his siblings had been saved from slavery by their mother's secretly sending them from Sweet Home in Kentucky to their grandmother's in Ohio. They were there less than a month when their mother attempted to kill all her children rather than have them returned to slavery. Surviving his mother's attempt to

kill them was not the end of Buglar, Howard and Denver's problems. Within months their mother is home from prison and later Baby Suggs' house is haunted by the spirit of the dead child. There is no Buglar listed in any name dictionary; there is no Buglar mentioned in numerous US history texts or histories of African-Americans; there is no Buglar mentioned in any mythology dictionary; there is no Buglar in two separate on-line computer searches; there is no Buglar listed in the Oxford English Dictionary. However, bug is an obsolete form, "possibly from Welsh *bwg* (=bug) 'a ghost'. . . ." One definition derived from that Welsh word is "an object of terror, usually an imaginary one; a bugbear, hobgoblin, bogy . . ." (Oxford English Dictionary). On one hand, Buglar appears to be one of the few names that Morrison creates. Morrison expands the bug- to form Buglar, a young boy who runs away from a house that is haunted by the ghost of his baby sister; however, the terror is a real one for him, just as real as the slavery he was born into and the attempt on his life. On the other hand, Buglar may suggest to bugle, to sound an alarm since his exit appears to announce the approach of danger in the form of Beloved. Suggs is the surname of his father, Halle.

Suggs, Denver -- Halle and Sethe's daughter; Baby Suggs' granddaughter; Buglar, Howard, and Beloved's sister. After her grandmother dies and her two brothers leave home, Denver

is alone with Sethe at 124 where hardly any one visits. For twelve years she lives in isolation with only two sources of pleasure, the company of the baby spirit and her mother's stories of her birth (see Denver, Amy). Before she left, Amy Denver said to Sethe, "'She's never gonna know who I am. You gonna tell her? Who brought her into this here world?' . . . 'You better tell her. You hear? Say Miss Amy Denver. Of Boston.'" Sethe listens as she slips into sleep; "she thought, 'That's pretty. Denver. Real pretty'" (85). Sethe's new baby is named for the white girl who helped deliver her. Denver is delighted when Beloved arrives; she worships Beloved and her only fear is that Beloved will leave again. However, when Denver realizes that Beloved is taking over the house and could possibly kill Sethe, then she leaves 124 for the first time in twelve years to seek help from Lady Jones. Once she leaves the shadowy world of 124, Denver develops into her own person. She realizes that she can save her mother and gets a job so they can have food; she also resumes her studies with Lady Jones. Her future, which once looked as bleak as the inside of 124, seems to be one of promise, one that she is attempting to direct through her choices. In this way she is like her namesake Amy Denver. Even though she was white, Amy was treated like a slave by the man she worked for. Yet once she decides she has fulfilled her obligations, she heads for Boston to buy America's finest velvet. Amy has a dream and

attempts to make it come true through direct action. In the same sense, Denver's obligations are paid and though she does not shirk her responsibility to Sethe, she is attempting to forge a life for herself. Amy's given name means love and that is part of Denver's character in her love for Grandma Baby, her mother, but especially for her Beloved. Morrison implies the possibility of interracial friendships when Amy comes to Sethe's aid; she strengthens that implication by having another generation carry the white girl's name, perhaps suggesting that such interracial relationships will become stronger but only with succeeding generations. Her surname is Suggs.

Suggs, Halle -- Baby Suggs' son; Sethe's husband; Beloved, Denver, Howard and Buglar's father. Halle was much loved by the two women in his life, his wife Sethe and his mother, Baby Suggs. He earned his mother her freedom by hiring himself out to other farms for five years on his one day of rest, Sunday. When Sweet Home becomes intolerable, all the slaves plan to escape. But when the time comes, Sethe cannot find Halle; she sends the children ahead and is captured by the nephews, who "nurse" her as the schoolteacher takes notes (see nephews). When she eventually escapes and arrives at Baby Suggs' door, both women wait for Halle but he never comes. It is only when Paul D arrives eighteen years later that Sethe learns what

happened to her husband. After Sethe tells Paul D about the incident in the barn with the nephews, he realizes that Halle had been in the loft and had seen it all. He tells Sethe:

> 'You said they stole your milk. I never knew what it was that messed him up. That was it, I guess. All I knew was that something broke him. Not a one of them years of Saturdays, Sundays and nighttime extra never touched him. But whatever he saw go on in that barn that day broke him like a twig.' (68)

Sethe is incredulous that a husband who loved her so much did not come to her rescue. She resolves that if Halle is alive, he can never come into her house. But Paul D must tell her that "'It broke him, Sethe.' . . . 'You may as well know it all. Last time I saw him he was sitting by the churn. He had butter all over his face'" (69). She realizes that Halle has the butter on his face

> because the milk they took is on his mind. And as far as he is concerned, the world may as well know it. And if he was that broken then, then he is also and certainly dead now. (70)

Halle (from English, German) means "dweller in, or near the manor house; . . . servant in the principal room of the manor house . . ." (Smith). "Dweller near the manor house" and "servant in the manor house" certainly reflect Halle's role as slave. Unlike Sethe and Paul D, Halle probably dies a slave since he is incapacitated by seeing his wife abused and his escape seems unlikely. It is ironic that a man who

worked so diligently for his mother's freedom should never gain his own even though he was given the opportunity to escape. Instead, his fate appears to be contained in his name since he probably never left the manor house, Sweet Home. His surname is Suggs, a legacy of his mother's love for her "husband," not of his father.

Suggs, Howard -- Halle and Sethe's son; Baby Suggs' grandson; Beloved, Denver and Buglar's brother. Like his brother and sister, Howard suffered the terrors of 124 (see Suggs, Buglar) and after years of living with the baby spirit, "as soon as two tiny hand prints appeared in the cake (that was it for Howard)" (3). Even though it is never mentioned, it is probable that the boys were twins. They "had run away by the time they were thirteen years old" (3). When Sethe tries to remember her sons, "little by little she stopped and their thirteen-year-old faces faded completely into their baby ones" (39). The association of the same age with each son suggests they were twins. As children they were constantly holding hands, which may demonstrate the strong bond of twins and/or the bond of two children who were almost killed by their mother. Howard is an English personal name derived from the "Germanic elements hug heart, mind, spirit and hard hardy, brave, strong" (Hanks and Hodges First Names). Buglar's name suggests fear and Howard's name suggests the opposite even though both were

frightened by the same ghost and both ran away. If the boys are twins, together their names sum up their experiences. For years they tried to be brave, to stay with the mother who attempted to kill them. But in the end they were too frightened by the baby spirit. Suggs is his surname.

Suggs, Sethe -- the novel's protagonist; Halle's wife; Baby Suggs' daughter-in-law; Beloved, Denver, Howard and Buglar's mother. Sethe comes to Sweet Home when she is fourteen years old to replace the freed Baby Suggs and "marries" the son that bought Baby Suggs her freedom. Halle and Sethe have three children and she is pregnant with the fourth when life at Sweet Life becomes intolerable after the schoolteacher takes charge of the farm. Taking advantage of the underground railroad, Sethe sends her children to their grandmother. Her escape is delayed when Halle does not arrive at the appointed time and place and when the nephews drag her to the barn to "nurse" her and then to beat her. Later, she does escape and Denver is born enroute to Ohio where Sethe and her newborn are welcomed by Baby Suggs. Her life as a free woman lasts only twenty-eight days, however. The schoolteacher tracks her to Ohio and when Sethe sees him, she gathers her children and attempts to kill them rather than have them live as slaves. She goes to prison for a short time for killing the "crawling already? baby," the name she uses for the child she later calls Beloved, the

name derived from Sethe's surprise that the child had begun crawling in so short a time. As she tells Paul D, "She was crawling already when I got here. One week, less, and the baby who was sitting up and turning over when I put her on the wagon was crawling already" (159). After Sethe is released from prison, the child's spirit haunts the family for over a decade. The spirit then materializes as eighteen year old Beloved who returns to reclaim her mother and almost succeeds in killing her. After Beloved vanishes, Sethe emulates Baby Suggs and goes to bed, perhaps to wait for death. However, Morrison holds out the possibility of survival for the long suffering Sethe and even love in the form of Paul D, a former Sweet Home slave. As a young girl Sethe hardly knew her mother, also a slave, because she worked too long and hard in the rice fields to have energy for a daughter. After her mother is hanged, Nan, a community surrogate mother for the slave children, tells Sethe that her mother had been sexually abused before and had other children, but that Sethe was the only one she kept. According to Nan,

> 'She threw them all away but you. The one from the crew she threw away on the island. The others from more whites she also threw away. Without names, she threw them. You she gave the name of the black man. She put her arms around him. The others she did not put her arms around. Never. Never. . . . ' (62)

Sethe's conception also mirrors the conception of her own children who were born in love but also born into slavery. Sethe carries her father's name. Assuming that he was a slave, in keeping with the naming practice of white owners for their slaves, he was probably named for the biblical Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve. His birth in Genesis 4:25 "seems intended to contrast with the debauched and violent line of Cain." Seth lived to be 930 and his name refers to a "divine 'establishing' of replacement, a replacement for the murdered Abel" (Hanks and Hodges First Names). There is no indication that Sethe's father was murdered and that she was a replacement for him. However, considering that her mother was hanged, there is the possibility that he, too, had been killed. "The assonance of the proper name Seth and the verb sat serves to emphasize the sense in which Seth's birth brings to an end one line and begins a new line of descent" (Hanks and Hodges First Names). Morrison will rarely adhere strictly to a biblical allusion in her naming. The line of Sethe's children born into slavery is ended to the extent that three grew up and that the fourth is accounted for when she returns from the spirit world. A new line seems improbable; Paul D suggests to Sethe that they have a child, but she comes to the conclusion that "she had all the children she needed" (132). It is possible that instead of a literal ending of one line and the beginning of another in terms of children that

Morrison is drawing a line for the end of one part of Sethe's life and the beginning of another; after all, the biblical Seth lived to be 930. Beloved returns long enough for Sethe to realize who she is and to beg forgiveness but then vanishes. Even though she returns and leaves, Beloved's appearance affords Sethe the opportunity for closure in that one tragedy in her life. Paul D's explanation of Halle's behavior also erases any hope she had of his ever arriving at 124. In this way, the one part of her life that began in slavery is finished. The ending of the novel, with Paul D assuring Sethe that she is her best thing, promises a new life for Sethe, somewhat reflecting the biblical Seth. However, Seth is also a character from Egyptian mythology, the jealous brother of Osiris and Isis. When Isis is unable to punish Seth for his dismembering of Osiris's body, Horus, her son by Osiris, cuts off her head. Thoth, Isis's father, "immediately used his magical words of power to change his daughter's head into the head of a cow, and he quickly attached it to her body" (Rosenberg World Mythology 176). Wilfred D. Samuels and Clenora Hudson-Weems contend that "Sethe's indirect association with cows draws fully on the ancient mythologies and religion that her name suggests" (165). As evidence, they cite the Sweet Home men's propensity for having sex with calves, Paul D's comment after knowing Sethe and Halle have had sex that the move from calf to girl was not so great, and Paul D's

denunciation of Sethe when she tells him about killing the child--"'You got two feet, Sethe, not four'(165)" (137). They do not cite the incident of the nephews who take her milk and who have been taught by the schoolteacher to view the slaves as animals. Nor do they draw attention to Sethe's pride that even though she had to pass some hanged slaves, that she "walked right on by because only me had [Beloved's] milk . . . That when I got [to Ohio] I had milk enough for all?" (198). However, Samuels and Hudson-Weems note that

> because of its fecundity, the cow, like the earth, is often mother goddess, nurturer, and provider of food (milk), a life giving source . . . . Thus, by topsy-turvying the traditional negative stereotypes of chattel slavery, Morrison successfully elevates Sethe to the level of goddess through her selection of name alone. (137)

Barbara Hill Rigney notes that

> whether this name is derived from that of the Egyptian god, Seth, or from the biblical Seth, it represents, like most of the names that Morrison designates as chosen, a sense of heritage and a context of relational identity. (41)

Sweet Home -- farm which the Garners owned; where Sethe, Sixo, Baby Suggs, Halle, Paul D, Paul A and Paul F were slaves. When the Garners named their farm Sweet Home, they probably did so with the best intentions and probably truly

thought that it was a sweet home for the slaves they owned and treated so well. Paul D remembers that

> he grew up thinking that, of all the Blacks in Kentucky, only the five of them were men. Allowed, encouraged to correct Garner, even defy him. To invent ways of doing things; to see what was needed and attack it without permission. To buy a mother, choose a horse or a wife, handle guns, even learn reading if they wanted to -- but they didn't want to since nothing important to them could be put down on paper. (125)

The five slaves were considered Sweet Home men by the Garners and by themselves. They knew that the Garners were far superior to most other white slave owners, but they also knew that regardless of the sweet home the Garners provided that they were still slaves. When Sethe was there,

> she . . . had to bring a fistful of salsify into Mrs. Garner's kitchen every day just to be able to work in it, feel like some part of it was hers, because she wanted to love the work she did, to take the ugly out of it, and the only way she could feel at home on Sweet Home was if she picked some pretty growing thing and took it with her. (22)

But even the Garner's brand of slavery was tolerable until Mr. Garner died and the schoolteacher came. With his arrival and the steps that he took to reduce the Sweet Home men to Sweet Home slaves in name and deed, the schoolteacher completely reversed any positives associated with the name Sweet Home. Life became more like hell and all the slaves attempted to escape it. Years later, for Sethe, images of the farm were likely to appear at any time

> and suddenly there was Sweet Home rolling, rolling, rolling out before her eyes,and although there was not a leaf on that farm that did not make her want to scream, it rolled itself out before her in shameless beauty. It never looked as terrible as it was and it made her wonder if hell was a pretty place too. (6)

Paul D reminds Sethe, "'It wasn't sweet and it sure wasn't home'" (14). With his comment and the reversal of the farm's name, Morrison clearly articulates the idea that no form of slavery is acceptable.

Thirty-Mile Woman -- the woman that Sixo loved. She was a fourteen year old slave girl that was promised to someone else but who loved Sixo. If she has another name, it is lost because to the Sweet Home men she was the one for whom Sixo walked thirty miles.

> He left on a Saturday when the moon was in the place he wanted it to be, arrived at her cabin before church on Sunday and had just enough time to say good morning before he had to start back again so he'd make the field call on time Monday morning. He had walked for seventeen hours, sat down for one, turned around and walked seventeen more. (21)

Sixo took a considerable risk in traveling so far; Paul D remembers that Sixo "was hell bent to make [a family] with the Thirty-Mile-Woman" (219), and he must have been successful since he screamed, "'Seven-O'" as he died. Their relationship was more than sexual, however. As Paul D sits with Sethe when she feels completely defeated, he remembers Sixo telling him that the Thirty-Mile-Woman

> 'was a friend of my mind. She gather me, man. The pieces I am, she gather them and give them back to me in all the right order. It's good, you know, when you got a woman who is a friend of your mind.' (272-73)

Her name is a testimony to the love that Sixo had for her, to his willingness to go so far and to risk so much for her. Love in its different forms is a theme of the novel, and the Thirty-Mile-Woman and Sixo's relationship is one of the significant examples.

Vashti -- Stamp Paid's wife. Vashti is an example of the African-American slave woman who is taken into the white master's home for sex. Stamp Paid explains to Paul D that "Vashti and me was in the fields together in the day and every now and then she be gone all night" (233). When she returns to their home, he is tempted to kill her but does not. Stamp Paid reveals that she died on the trip to Cumberland. There are two possible sources for her name. Morrison could draw attention to the lack of control of the married slave woman over her sexual life by ironically naming her after the nineteenth century novel Vashti; or Until death Us do part by Augusta J. Evans. In Andrew Lang's Magic and Religion the name Vashti is associated with a goddess of the Elamites, "vanquished foes of Babylon" ; she is also referred to as a sacred harlot (78). Even though Stamp Paid was well aware of the white master's sense

of "rightness" in sexually using his "property," he could have viewed his wife as a harlot.

Wagon, Janey -- African-American woman who works for the Bodwins. Janey is possibly a pet name for Jane, a common slave name, which is the feminine form of John, derived from the Hebrew "God is gracious" (Hanks and Hodges First). Pet names might not be expected for a slave, but Janey worked for the abolitionists, the Bodwins, and Janey probably is one. Janey is gracious to both Baby Suggs and Denver when they come to the Bodwins for help. When Mr. Garner brings Baby Suggs to the Garners, a young Janey asks her, "'Can I get you anything to eat, ma'am?'" (143). Then, "Janey heated some milk and poured it in a bowl next to a plate of cornbread" (144). Almost twenty years later, Denver turns to the Bodwins when Beloved has completely taken over 124. She does not know them, only remembers that they had helped Baby Suggs and later her mother. When she arrives at their house, Janey answers the door. She recognizes Denver as Baby Suggs' relative and has only good things to say about Baby Suggs. Janey again demonstrates her graciousness by convincing the Bodwins that they need Denver to work for them. But Janey's most important act is to tell the community women about the true situation at 124; they decide to go there to help Sethe and that incident results in Beloved's disappearing. Wagon seems an inappropriate

surname for a freed slave. One would assume that it might imply the burdens that slaves have to carry. Although Janey is free, perhaps Morrison is drawing attention to the burdens that all African Americans of the nineteenth century bore.

Woodruff, Able -- man who does chores for the Bodwins. Janey explains to Baby Suggs, when she first arrives at the Bodwins, that she does the cooking and washing and Mr. Woodruff comes by several times a week to do the outside chores. He is the one who takes Baby Suggs to her new home at 124. "It was dark when Woodruff clicked the horse into a trot. He was a young man with a heavy beard and a burned place on his jaw the beard did not hide" (146). Baby Suggs asks if he were born in Ohio, and he tells her that he is from Virginia and has been there for only a few years. The burned place on his face, the fact that he is from Virginia and that he works for two abolitionists suggest that he is a runaway slave. Able tells Baby Suggs that if she goes to see Rev. Pike that he will reacquaint her with the Lord, whom she had said must have forgotten who she was. In his helpfulness and his concern for her relationship with the Lord, Able demonstrates a connection to the word able, "having sufficient ability or resources"; "especially capable or talented" (The American Heritage Dictionary). His name could have been given to him by a white owner who

followed the practice of giving slaves biblical names or he could have been named by a father who blindly chose a word from the Bible. Due to the religious nature of his sister's name, the latter is more probable. Because he has no brother, a Cain/Able allusion seems remote. However, his demeanor implies a goodness, a kindness that may connect him to the broader brotherhood of man. The surname Woodruff is an "English topographical name for someone who lived on a patch of land thickly grown with woodruff," a plant with a sweet smell; ". . . the surname many also have been a nickname for one who used it as a perfume" (Hanks and Hodges Surnames). The positive connotation of the surname works with the given name to reveal a minor character who may reflect a general community attitude.

Woodruff, Scripture -- Able's sister. While Stamp Paid and Paul D sit on the front steps on the church talking, "a woman with four children walked by on the other side of the road. She waved, smiling. "'Hoo-oo. I can't stop. See you at meeting.'" Stamp Paid has been listing all the people who would gladly give Paul D a place to stay, and when the woman passes, he tells Paul D,

> 'There's another one ' . . . 'Scripture Woodruff, Able's sister. Works at the brush and tallow factory. You'll see. Stay around here long enough, you'll see ain't a sweeter bunch of colored anywhere than what's right here.' (232)

With her biblical given name, the connotation of her maiden name (see Woodruff, Able), her friendliness, and her reference to a church gathering, Scripture exemplifies the "sweet bunch of colored" that make up the community that Sethe and Paul D will reenter should she leave her bed and start the new life that the novel's ending promises. This community contrasts sharply with the white world Sethe and Paul D have been exposed to.

CHAPTER VII

JAZZ

Acton -- the young man Dorcas prefers over Joe. Acton

> is up and coming. Hawk-eyed, tireless and a little cruel. He has never given [Dorcas] a present or even thought about it. Sometimes he is where he says he will be; sometimes not. Other women want him--badly--and he has been selective. (188)

Dorcas changes how she laughs, how she eats, and even how she wears her hair for Acton.

> He worries about me that way. Joe never did. Joe didn't care what kind of woman I was. He should have. I cared. I wanted to have a personality and with Acton I'm getting one, (190)

Because she is young, Dorcas does not understand that she is merely becoming the image of the kind of woman that Acton wants or that she is suppressing her individuality, not developing a personality. When she is shot, Acton holds her up and gets blood on his jacket. "He is annoyed by the blood. . . . Acton looks angry; the woman brings his jacket back and it is not clean the way it was before and the way he likes it" (192). An acton is "a stuffed jacket or jerkin" (Oxford English Dictionary) which connects the character to his concern over the jacket. This concern for a piece of clothing over his concern for human suffering

could also connect him with the sweetbacks (see sweetbacks) Joe notices on the street corner one winter morning. In spite of the below freezing temperature, they are interested in posing, in setting a style--"'One wore spats, and one had a handkerchief in his pocket same color as his tie. Had his coat draped across his shoulders'" (132). As his actions indicate, Acton is a man of style over substance; his name emphasizes his superficiality, which further contrasts Acton and Joe's concern for Dorcas.

City, the -- the Harlem section of New York City, the setting for a majority of the novel.

> Curiously, Morrison almost never uses the word 'Harlem'; instead, throughout the novel she refers to this section of New York as 'the City.' This nomenclature conveys the legendary power that this specific locale had in the 1920's, as well as suggesting the mythic dimensions that large cities in general had for African Americans at that time . . . . (Andrews 404)

Throughout the novel, the Harlem section is also treated like a character since "the City" is capitalized, giving it the appearance of a given name. The City functions as a siren for Southern African Americans.

> Some were slow about it and traveled from Georgia to Illinois, to the City, back to Georgia, out to San Diego and finally, shaking their heads, surrendered themselves to the City. (32)

This surrender, for the most part, "is for forever" and involves discovering "their stronger, riskier selves" (33); the city pumps desire. "There is no air in the City but there is breath" (34). The City becomes what the newcomers "want it to be: thriftless, warm, scary and full of amiable strangers" (35). Violet tells Alice that she was a good "'till I got here. City make you tighten up'" (81). For Violet, the City had also taken away her physical strength.

> But twenty years doing hair in the City had softened her arms and melted the shield that once covered her palms and fingers. Like shoes taking away the tough leather her bare feet had grown, the City took away the back and arm power she used to boast of (92)

in Virginia. The narrator declares that the City

> makes you do what it wants, go where the laid-out roads say to. All the while letting you think you're free; that you can jump into thickets because you feel like it. There are no thickets here and if mowed grass is okay to walk on the City will let you know. You can't get off the track a City lays for you. (120)

The power of the City is difficult to ignore; through Morrison's personification of it, the City plays its role in the plot just as a character does. However, New York for Morrison is not only Harlem. She emphasizes the size of New York City by having the characters mention street after street. She also stresses the contrast of the areas within the City with references to Tuxedo Park, Park Avenue, Long Island, Brooklyn, the Tenderloin district and Little Africa.

Clark, Winsome -- young woman from Barbados. When Malvonne Edwards finds the bag of mail that her nephew has stolen, she reads the letters; Winsome's was one of these. In the letter to her husband stationed in Panama, Winsome writes that she and the children are returning to Barbados to be near their families because the money he sends them is not enough to live on. Winsome means "winning and charming" (The American Heritage Dictionary), but the young woman is anything but that. There is no charm in the letter she writes full of grammatical and punctuation errors--a letter that reflects her lack of education and/or that English is her second language. There is no charm in a life that has forced her to the City to live with an aunt who mistreats her and her children, who is "watering down the children's milk on the sly and whipping the five-year-old for mishandling the hot, heavy pressing iron . . . " (43). There is no winning in her perception that only African Americans seem to be dying in Panama. She writes her husband that she is "'sorry your good friend dead in the big fire and pray for he and you how come so much colored people dying where whites doing great stuff'" (43). Winsome's story takes up less than two pages of the novel, but in presenting a life that contrasts so sharply with the character's name, Morrison seems to be placing the burden of Winsome's troubles on the white world that does not pay an African-American soldier enough to support his wife. With

Winsome's lack of education and her return home, there is also an implication that her life will never be winning or charming. Clark is her married name.

Edwards, Malvonne -- neighbor who rents Joe the apartment where he secretly meets Dorcas.

> Malvonne lived alone with newspapers and other people's stories printed in small books. When she was not making her office building sparkle, she was melding the print stories with her keen observation of the people around her, (40-41).

When Joe decides that he will need a place to meet a woman, he pays Malvonne two dollars a month to rent her rooms while she works at night. Even though Malvonne hesitates, her interest in watching the people around her overrides her fear of what Violet might do if she found out. However, it is Malvonne who tells Violet that Joe periodically used her rooms. The two elements in her name do not totally reveal Malvonne's character. The word part *mal-* means bad, "abnormal, abnormally" (The American Heritage Dictionary), but she does nothing bad or abnormal. Instead, she is just a woman who lives alone, who lives vicariously through stories and through her neighbors' lives. Like Winsome Clark's, Malvonne's name is a contrast to her character. There is no English word part *vonne*. Her name could be an example of the practice of "inventing new and unprecedented names for girls, often of an unearthly and supercolassal

character," a practice that "appeared sporadically in the North - before the Civil War . . . " (Mencken 617, 619). Like Buglar from Beloved, this appears to be one of the few names that Morrison created. Her surname is Edwards, an Old English word comprised of the elements for "prosperity, fortune and guard" (Hanks and Hodges Surname). Just as Malvonne's character is not truly reflected in her given name, neither is it reflected in her surname because she is not prosperous and she is not always on guard. Try though she may, she is not entirely successful in rearing her nephew Sweetness, who steals a mailbag and then runs away. Neither is she on guard for Violet. Although it is Malvonne who eventually tells Violet about Joe and Dorcas, it is Malvonne who rents Joe the room where the lovers can meet. She is a peripheral part of the relationship that eventually leads to Dorcas's death and to Violet's mutilating of her corpse. Although she is not ultimately responsible for either, by not standing guard against the lovers, she contributed to the tragedies.

Felice -- Dorcas's friend. Throughout a majority of the novel, Felice's only function seems to be as Dorcas's friend, one she can party with and share secrets with. However, after Dorcas's death she visits Joe and Violet's apartment and explains that Joe's shot did not kill Dorcas. She was shot in the shoulder and would not let anyone move

her, preferring to sleep, promising to go the hospital in the morning. "'She bled to death all through that woman's bed sheets . . . '" (209). Violet obviously likes Felice and invites her back for a catfish supper. During that visit, Felice functions as a plot device in asking two questions. She asks Violet why she tried to cut the face of Dorcas's corpse at the funeral and asks Joe why he shot Dorcas (210). On her second visit, Joe and Felice talk;

> 'Felice. That means happy. Are you?'" She says no and asks him how he and Violet are getting along. Joe replies, "'We working on it. Faster now, since you stopped by and told us what you did.' (212)

Later, the three of them hear music from across the street. Felice explains that Joe

> 'moved his head to the rhythm and his wife snapped her fingers in time. She did a little step in front of him and he smiled. By and by they were dancing. Funny, like old people do, and I laughed for real. Not because of how funny they looked. Something in it made me feel I shouldn't be there. Shouldn't be looking at them doing that.' (214)

When Felice leaves, Joe tells her, "'Felice. They named you right. Remember that'" (215). Felice is the feminine form of Felix, which is Latin for lucky (Hanks and Hodges First Names). In Spanish, Felice means lucky, happy, one who takes risks and one that can bring happiness. Felice lives up to the spirit of her name when she visits the Trace apartment and functions as a healing element for Joe and

Violet's shattered relationship. She, too, appears to be healing and embodying her name since her laugh is "for real".

Gistan -- Joe Trace's friend. In the three joint references to Stuck and Gistan, there is nothing to differentiate between Joe's two friends. Both protect Joe by not telling him about Violet's unusual behaviors, such as trying to steal a baby; they come to ask Joe to play cards and are embarrassed that Violet has released the parrots; and according to Joe, the three men are "close but not like it is with somebody knew you from when you was born and you got to manhood at the same time" (123), which accounts for why he does not tell them about Dorcas. Stuck and Gistan are interchangeable at this point. Morrison does write of "Gistan's sons" as a means of personalizing Gistan. However, Gistan becomes important to Joe and differentiated from Stuck when he functions as a source of information about the 1917 East St. Louis riots. Even though Joe was injured in them, he was not sure how the riots started.

> Could have been what the papers said, what the waiters [he] worked with said, or what Gistan said--that party, he said, where they sent out invitations to whites to come see a colored man burn alive. Gistan said thousands of whites turned up. Gistan said it sat on everybody's chest, and if the killing hadn't done it, something else would have. (128)

The historical background for Gistan's information is the 1917 turnout of more than three thousand people to the invitation of a Tennessee newspaper "to come out and witness the burning of a 'live Negro'" (Franklin and Moss 307). The repetition of "Gistan said" plus the historical context of Gistan's information draws the reader's attention to Gistan's actions and to his name. Gist is "the substance or pith of a matter, the essence or main point" (Oxford English Dictionary). Gistan's name mirrors the role he plays for Joe Trace; he is the one who gets to the essence of information, even if the particulars are inaccurate, about the African Americans' relationship with whites. Although he withheld information from Joe about Violet, Gistan's name seems to imply that a man's personal life is one thing, but his "racial life" is another and that the truth is essential in the latter.

Gray, Golden -- Henry Lestroy and Vera Louise's son; the racially mixed child True Belle cared for. Golden Gray's name draws attention to the visual sense because it is composed of two colors. This is quite appropriate because Golden Gray is the offspring of an African-American father, the poor Henry Lestroy (Hunters Hunter) and a white mother, the pampered daughter of Col. and Mrs. Gray. Even though it is obvious that he bears his mother's surname, the surname also reflects the mixture of black and white which creates

gray. When he is born, his mother, Vera Louise, plans to send him to a foundling home; however, he "was golden and she had never seen that color except in the morning sky and in bottles of champagne" (148). He is also named Golden because "after the pink birth-skin disappeared along with the down on his head, his flesh was radiantly golden, and floppy yellow curls covered his head and the lobes of his ears" (139). When the Grays discover their daughter is pregnant by an African American, they give her enough money to leave Virginia and never return. She and True Belle go to Baltimore where the child is born and saved from an orphanage because of his golden color. He is also treated like a golden boy, a prince. True Belle tells the young Violet

> how they [she and his mother] bathed the child three times a day; how the G on his underwear was embroidered with blue thread. The shape of the tub and what they put in the water to make him smell like honeysuckle sometimes and sometimes of lavender. How clever he was and how perfect a gentleman. The hilarious grown-up comments he made when a child and the cavalierlike courage he showed when he was a young man and went to find, then kill, if he was lucky, his father. (142-43)

In searching for and finding Henry Lestroy, Golden Gray attempts to reconcile the blood of the two races within him, the blood that gave him his name.

Gray, Vera Louise -- Golden Gray's mother. In the small community in Vesper County, Virginia,

> certainly nobody could help noticing how many time a week a Negro boy from out Vienna way was called on to ride along with Miss Vera, and what part of the woods she preferred to ride in, (140)

When Vera Louise's parents learn that their daughter is pregnant by an unnamed African American, they provide her with enough money to leave; "so much money the message was indisputable: die, or live if you like, elsewhere" (141). Vera Louise moves to Baltimore where she tells her neighbors that she had left the narrowmindedness of her hometown with a servant (True Belle) and an orphan boy to live in a more sophisticated environment. She never marries; to her neighbors, her lifestyle "was a renegade, almost suffragette thing to do, and the neighbors and would-be women friends surrounded Vera Louise with as polite a distance as they could manage" (139). Vera Louise rarely tells her son the truth about anything, but when Golden Gray is eighteen, one of the few truths she tells him is that "his father was a black-skinned nigger" (143). The surname Gray is appropriate for Vera Louise and her father (father of seven mulatto children) since both sexually combine the black and white to produce a mixed child(ren). Vera is a Russian name meaning "faith" which "coincides in form with the feminine form of the Latin adjective versus true"; Louise is the feminine form of Louis which is combined from the elements hlud fame and wig warrior (Hanks and Hodges First Names). Vera Louise could be described as a warrior; after all,

Morrison labels her actions "renegade," in terms of battling the mores of her community, first in Wordsworth, Virginia and again in Baltimore. Even though she lies to her son, perhaps to protect him as long as she can, Morrison depicts her as a woman who remains true to the life that she has chosen for herself, a woman unswayed by public pressure in Baltimore to conform to a lifestyle appropriate for her social status. In the context of her consistent portrayal of strong women, Morrison appears to condone if not fully to endorse the young woman's actions when she is described as "renegade" and "almost suffragette" and especially when she is named Vera. Though she lies to her son and to her acquaintances in Baltimore, there is no sense that Morrison is being completely ironic in her naming. Vera Louise is not as sympathetically drawn as Amy Denver in Beloved, but she is one of the few white characters who have any redeeming characteristics.

Honor -- young African-American boy who did chores for Henry Lestroy when Henry was away from home. When he arrives at Henry's to feed the stock as he has promised, Honor is surprised to see a white man, Golden Gray, stagger out of Henry's house. It is Honor who answers Golden's questions and therefore reveals to Golden that he is already at his father's house. Honor enters Henry's house at Golden's request; he wants help with Wild. Because Golden has always

been catered to, he has little knowledge on what to do for Wild, pregnant and unconscious from a fall, even though he has covered her with a dress. It is Honor who knows what to do. At thirteen the boy is older than Golden in terms of experience; Honor "had seen enough people slumped over a plow, or stilled after childbirth, and enough drowned children to know the difference between the quick and the dead" (162). Honor calls for water, tries to get Wild to drink and cleans her face. When Henry returns, Honor addresses him as "Sir." In his sense of responsibility, his ability to aid a wounded person, and his respectful manner, Honor lives up to his name. Morrison juxtaposes the young, responsible African-American male and the older ineffectual, spoiled, revenge seeking "white" Golden Gray; the contrast she wanted to achieve is obvious. As a possible diminutive of Honorable, Honor is not listed with any of the titular names of slaves and freed slave in Black Names in America. It is more probable that Honor received his name from the practice of blindly selecting a name from the Bible.

King -- True Belle's cat. Animals rarely go unnamed in Morrison's work, and most of the names have positive connotations: Old Honey (Bluest Eye), President Lincoln, Mary Todd, (Song of Solomon). An exception is Here Boy in Beloved. King is mentioned briefly in only one paragraph

but by naming him, Morrison draws attention to his presence. When Golden Gray enters his Henry's cabin, he notices the mattress is stuffed with rags

> shoved into a ticking shroud. It reminds [him] of the pillow True Belle made for King to sleep on at her feet. She had been given the name of a powerful male dog, but she was a cat without personality, which is why True Belle liked her and wanted her close by. (152)

The importance of King's name is that it is Golden Gray who remembers her. What he does not realize is the parallel between himself and King; both are misnamed. He too has a powerful name, Golden, and like the cat, has no personality. In his appearance and his actions, Golden Gray is constantly contrasted to Honor, Henry and Henry's simple cabin, and does not come out well in spite of his fine horse and fine clothes. Like King, Golden has been too pampered to be effectual.

LesTroy/Lestory, Henry -- Golden Gray's father. Henry is also referred to as Hunters Hunter--"the man the grandfathers called Hunters Hunter"; "when the man they called Hunters Hunter knew her . . . " (166, 167). His name is derived from his expertise in the woods; "he'd become a hunter's hunter (and when spoken of and to, that is what they called him) . . . " (168). When he returns to his cabin, Golden Gray, a stranger, is there with Honor and Wild, another stranger, one who gives birth in his cabin.

That baby is Joe Trace, to whom Henry will later teach the secrets of the woods. Henry believes Golden is a white man until Golden calls him "Daddy." Hearing himself called this is a complete surprise since Henry had no idea that Vera Louise was pregnant, that he might have a son. Golden is antagonistic but eventually Henry speaks bluntly to his son. When he has had enough of Golden, Henry tells him:

> 'You come in here, drink my liquor, rummage in my stuff and think you can cross-talk me just cause you call me Daddy? If she told you I was your daddy, then she told you more than she told me. Get a hold of yourself. A son ain't what a woman say. A son is what a man do. You want to act like you mine, then do it, else get the devil out my house!' (172)

He tells Golden that he will have to choose between black or white. "'But if you choose black, you got to act black, meaning draw your manhood up--quicklike, and don't bring me no whiteboy sass'" (173). Like Honor, Henry (Hunters Hunter) contrasts sharply with Golden, not just in appearance but in action. With his love of the woods and his sense of what is right, Henry suggests Sam Fathers from Faulkner's "The Bear." Henry attempts through his definition of son to teach Golden how he should behave. Henry is an English name with the elements haim home and ric power, ruler and the name of a number of English kings (Hanks and Hodges First). A reader meets Henry for the first time in his home, a simple cabin; he is kinglike in his behavior to the extent that he does not grovel before

Golden, whom he thinks is a white man. In his first statement to the young man, Henry does not even add the expected "Sir." In their encounter, it is obvious that Henry, who bears the name of kings, is superior to Golden, who was reared as a young prince. Henry never does anything to diminish that perception. True Belle had revealed his father's name to Golden, "although from the way True Belle pronounced it, it could be something else. . . . Henry Lestory or LesTroy or something like that, but who cares what the nigger's name is" (148). The royal connection established in Henry can be continued in LesTroy with the suggestion of the French *roi*, king. LesTroy also suggests the French *les troyens*, the Trojans. With this hint of royalty and mythological warriors, Morrison continues her contrast between the African-American man and his racially mixed son who exhibits all the negative characteristics of a pampered, rich, young white male. The omission of the apostrophe in Hunters Hunter also draws attention to Henry's stature; he belongs to no man, only to himself, so no mark of possession is needed in his name.

Manfred, Alice -- Dorcas's aunt. When Alice's sister and brother-in-law were killed in the East St. Louis riots, she took Dorcas in. Surprisingly, Violet comes to visit Alice to discover more about the girl her husband chose over her, the girl whose face she tried to cut. Even though Alice

does not welcome her on the first visit, Violet returns frequently. Through their discussions the women form an odd friendship, and each one is able to work through some of her problems. Alice can empathize with Violet because her husband had an affair, too, and Alice had dreamed of revenge on the woman. It is Alice who advises Violet to try to make her relationship with Joe work, regardless of what he had done. "'You got anything left to you to love, anything at all, do it'" (113). Alice is a variant of Adelaide, composed of the elements adal noble and heid kind, sort (Stewart). Manfred is an old Germanic personal name derived from man but more likely from magin strength, manage much, many, and fred peace (Hanks and Hodges First Names). Alice Manfred's name mirrors her growth following her niece's death. By allowing Violet into her home and listening to her, Alice is kind and even noble by getting past Violet's attack on her niece. Her advice about love enables Joe and Violet to begin the slow process of rebuilding their relationship. Through the conversations Alice also finds a sense of herself and seems to gain a peace she did not have prior to Violet's visits. Morrison's novels invariably contain strong female relationships; this is one of the most unusual, but it is no less important than the others.

Manfred, Dorcas-- Alice's niece, the young woman Joe shoots. Dorcas was orphaned when her father was killed in the East

St. Louis riots and when the family home, on the same day, was torched, with her mother inside. She comes to the City to live with her aunt Alice who tries to give her a moral upbringing. However, "even as a nine-year-old in elementary school she was bold"; in spite of all of Alice Manfred's precautions--tight braids, hightopped shoes, thick stockings--"nothing hid the boldness swaying under her cast-iron skirt" (61). When she is eighteen, Dorcas has an affair with Joe Trace, who is several decades older than she. After a few months, she turns to a young man closer to her own age, Acton. Her affair with the married Joe was secret, but she and Acton are able to go to parties together. On the night of one of those parties, Dorcas has a sense that Joe will find her, and he does; he shoots her. She later bleeds to death because she did not want to go to the hospital, perhaps not wanting Alice Manfred to know about her secret life. Dorcas is an English name derived from the Greek dorkas doe, gazelle (Hanks and Hodges First). Even though Dorcas has skin that is "light and creamy everywhere but her cheeks" (68) and this bad skin is mentioned several times, she is a graceful dancer, which could make her gazelle-like. In the Bible, Dorcas is an "'interpretation' of the Aramaic name Tabitha (Acts 9:36)" (Hanks and Hodges First). In the New Testament, Tabitha, a female disciple known for her charitable works, is raised from the dead by Peter. "Her death left widows weeping as

they showed garments which she had made. Her influence continues in later Dorcas Societies of church women devoted to good works" (Interpreter's Bible). Dorcas bears little relationship to her biblical namesake. She is primarily concerned with herself instead of others; there are few if any charitable acts in her life. Rather than make garments, she tries to modify the young looking dresses her aunt sews for her in an attempt to ward off the evil of adult men looking at Dorcas. As usual, Morrison modifies the biblical allusions for her names, often contrasting rather than paralleling the characters. The Dorcas Societies may, however, be the springboard for Morrison's frequent mentioning of women's clubs in the City, such as the Gay Northeasters, the City Belles and the Circle A Society. It is Alice Manfred, a seamstress, who would be more closely associated with a Dorcas Society than her niece. Perhaps the presence of the clubs merely suggests the power of African-American women to organize and to accomplish goals as a group--proof that they are, as Alice realized, neither defenseless nor easy prey. Dorcas uses her aunt's surname, Manfred, which does not apply to her because she has little inner strength and finds no peace in her short life. Perhaps this lack of her parents' name was partially responsible for creating a void in Dorcas that she attempted to fill with the love of an older man, the rhythms of the City, and the attention of a hip young man.

Miller, Neola -- one of the two Miller sisters who, for a short period, watched over Dorcas, "when she was little" (61), while her aunt worked. Frances Miller would feed sandwiches to the schoolchildren, and Neola would read Psalms to them. But when Frances fell asleep, Neola would occasionally smoke an Old Gold cigarette and tell the children stories "of moral decay, of the wicked who prayed on the good," stories meant as warnings, stories motivated by Neola's experiences with love. She had been jilted a week after her engagement, and

> the pain of his refusal was visual, for over her heart, curled like a shell, was the hand on which he positioned the ring. As though she held the broken pieces of her heart together in the crook of a frozen arm. No other part of her was touched by the paralysis. (62)

Neola's name suggests the warning in her stories and her permanently curled arm; it suggests the "nay" to men and to physical love. Ironically, however, Dorcas was captivated by the stories of the women who suffered because of love, which she equated with Paradise, and as a teenager never heeds the "nay" of Neola's stories and example. Morrison emphasizes the ineffectualness of the "nay" by moving directly from Dorcas hearing the stories as a child to "By the time she was seventeen her whole life was unbearable" (63). The Narrator empathizes with Dorcas, noting how one does not seem to care much about life at that age "because

you are not doing the thing worth doing which is lying down somewhere in a dimly lit place enclosed in arms, and supported by the core of the earth" (63). That is exactly what Neola warned against and exactly the yearning that contributed to Dorcas' death.

Narrator, the -- one of the several voices through which the story is told. Neither Morrison nor the narrator provides this voice with a name, race or a sex. However, it is probable that the narrator is an African American because anything else would be unimaginable in a Morrison novel. It is just as probable that the narrator is a female since most of Morrison's narrator's are. However, the reader is never sure because the narrating voice uses "partner" instead of husband or wife for such observations as the partner "promises to give you exclusive attention after supper, but is falling asleep just as you have begun to speak . . . " (9). However, even with no specific name, race or sex, the narrator is not devoid of personality. He/she is

> crazy about this City. . . . A city like this one makes me dream tall and feel in on things. . . . When I look over strips of green grass lining the river, at church steeples and into the cream-and-copper halls of apartment buildings, I'm strong. Alone, yes, but top-notch and indestructible . . . . (7)

The narrator describes himself/herself as "curious, inventive and well-informed" (137). By the final chapter, however, some of the narrator's enthusiasm has diminished.

> I ought to get out of this place. Avoid the window; leave the hole I cut through the door to get in lives instead of having one of my own. It was loving the City that distracted me and gave me ideas. Made me think I could speak its loud voice and make that sound human. I missed the people altogether. (220)

Readers realize that the narrator they have trusted to this point has misread the entire situation; in fact, the fictive voice they listened to for the "truth" of the plot admits, ". . . I invented stories about [the people she had been watching] . . . " (220) and completely "missed it altogether," having implied in the opening chapter that there would be a killing in the Joe, Violet, Felice relationship. Morrison withholds a name as deliberately as she names. In Beloved, she labeled instead of named to demonstrate her utter contempt for the schoolteacher and his nephews. However, in this novel the lack of a name allows the narrator to distance himself/herself one step further from the fiction. There are no biblical or mythological allusions to add texture or nuances to the narrator's actions or to tie the narrator to anyone else. This lack of a background, of a sense of belonging, renders the nameless narrator almost faceless, remote. This lack of a name and its ramifications facilitate Morrison's device in the final

chapter by drawing attention to the creation of fiction rather than to the fiction itself.

parrot, the -- one of Violet's birds. Before his affair with Dorcas, Joe was bothered by Violet's bouts of quietness.

> Over time her silences annoy her husband, then puzzle him and finally depress him. He is married to a woman who speaks mainly to her birds. One of whom answers back: 'I love you.' (24)

After Violet attempts to slash the face of Dorcas's corpse,

> she ran, then, through all that snow, and when she got back to her apartment she took the birds from their cages and set them out the windows to freeze or fly, including the parrot that said, 'I love you.' (3)

This bird is one of the few animals in Morrison that is not named. After she releases him, Violet is unsure of his fate;

> did he get the message--that she said, 'My parrot' and he said, 'Love you,' and she had never said it back or even taken the trouble to name him--and manage somehow to fly away on wings that had not soared for six years. (93)

By withholding a name for the parrot, Morrison focuses on what he says, "Love you," thereby drawing attention to the theme of love that permeates the novel from the first paragraph to the last.

Rose Dear -- Violet's mother. Violet's father has to leave his family because of political difficulties. In his absence, local merchants arrive to repossess the family's belongings, even the chair they tip Rose Dear out of as she sits pretending to drink from a china cup. The few remaining neighbors take care of the family (five children and Rose Dear) and send for True Belle, Rose Dear's mother. Four years after her mother arrives, Rose Dear commits suicide by jumping in the well. Violet is never sure why her mother did this--whether it was their poverty, the news of racial violence, the longing and cravings that went unfulfilled--"or was it that chair they tipped her out of?" (101). Even though there are wild roses, the most prized are those that are cultivated, flowers that must be tended carefully to achieve their full bloom, their beauty. However, through her bleak portrait of Rose Dear's life, Morrison clearly points out that this is not the life that Rose Dear or any other slave woman had. The favorable connotations associated with her name contrast sharply with the realities of her life, realities that she eventually escapes through death. Dear could be a pet name attached to her given name when Rose was a child. It is not an uncommon name; Morrison uses a variation with M'dear in The Bluest Eye.

Sage, Mr. M -- After Sweetness steals a mailbag, the curious Malvonne (see Edwards, Malvonne) reads the letters; "a few of them required action on Malvonne's part" (42). One that especially troubles her is addressed to "Mr. M. Sage," but inside he is addressed as "daddy" by the letter writer, Hot Steam. Malvonne is so concerned that she reads the letter several times, then forwards it to Mr. Sage "with a note of her own attached--urging caution and directing daddy's attention to a clipping from Opportunity Magazine" (44). The contrast in names between the wise "Mr. M. Sage" and philandering "daddy" demonstrates Morrison's playfulness in naming, which is underscored by Malvonne's repeated reading of the letter and her own note. More seriously, Sage and Hot Steam's duplicity suggests the Joe/Dorcas affair which Malvonne tolerates since she receives rent money from Joe.

sweetbacks -- young African-American males. The day that Joe shoots Dorcas, he is tracking her across town.

> Across the street, leaning up against the iron railing, I saw three sweetbacks. Thirty degrees, not even ten in the morning, and they shone like patent leather. Smooth. Couldn't be more than twenty, twenty-two. Young. . . . One wore spats, and one had a handkerchief in his pocket same color as his tie. Had his coat draped across his shoulders. They were just leaning there, laughing and so on, and then they started crooning, leaning in, heads together, snapping fingers. City men, you know what I mean. Closed off to themselves, wise, young roosters. (132)

Joe realizes that unlike him, the sweetbacks never have to track anyone; instead, "roosters wait because they are the ones waited for" (133). He acknowledges that they are everything that he is not when he refers to himself as an old cock. Only later might Joe realize that he, the old cock, has been replaced by the young rooster, a sweetback, Acton. Joe may be contrasted to the sweetbacks and appear to lose, but in Morrison's novels, young African-American males are not often portrayed in a positive light and neither are sweets. With few exceptions, candy is a negative in The Bluest Eye (Pauline; Mary Janes and Pecola), Song of Solomon (Guitar), Beloved (Beloved). In this novel, Dorcas is Joe's "personal sweet-like candy" (120). Malvonne's nephew, who had to leave town when he got in trouble for stealing mail, changed his name from William Younger to Little Caesar, but she called him Sweetness. In his action and attitude, he could easily be one of the sweetbacks. By closely associating sweet and the African-American male, Morrison may be chastising the flashy roosters like Acton with their condescending attitudes toward women.

Trace, Joe -- Violet's husband, Dorcas's lover, Wild's son. Joe was born in Henry LesTroy's cabin to a young African-American woman, Wild, who rejects him by neither holding nor looking at him. There is never any mention of his father.

As a young man, Joe searches for Wild, wanting her to acknowledge that she is his mother. However she lives the life her name reflects and he never gets what he seeks. As soon as he was born, Joe was taken in by the Williams and reared as their own. Rhoda Williams named the baby for her father, Joseph, but with the six other children in the household, he was probably called Joe from the beginning. Joseph is an "English and French form of the biblical Hebrew name Yosef, meaning '(God) shall add (another son)'" (Hanks and Hodges First). One of the biblical Josephs is the beloved son of
Jacob who is sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. Directly and indirectly, the name Joseph suggests the father/son relationship Joe lacked. The lack of a one to one correspondence between a Morrison character and its biblical namesake is not uncommon. Even though the Williams provide Joe with a given name, they never gave him their surname or any other. As a child, Joe asked Rhoda where his parents were. Joe remembers that she answered, "'O honey, they disappeared without a trace. The way I heard it I understood her to mean the 'trace' they disappeared without was me'" (124). On the first day of school he gives his name as Joseph Trace; he names himself. When Victory Williams, one of the Williams' children, tells him that he should have called himself Joseph Williams, Joe explains that his parents need to be able to find him when they

return. "'They got to pick me out. From all of you all, they got to pick me. I'm Trace, what they went off without'" (124). A trace of parents is also what he lacks and what may account for the changes Joe goes through. When he is in the relationship with Dorcas, he feels reborn, "'fresh, new again. Before I met her I'd changed into new seven times'" (123). A trace is "a visible mark or sign of the former presence or passage of a person, thing, or event" and "a barely perceivable indication of something." Wild may cross her son's path with barely a trace, but she leaves a visible mark on his psyche. The narrator states that

> to this moment I'm not sure what his tears were really for, but I do know they were for more than Dorcas. All the while he was running through the streets in bad weather I thought he was looking for her, not Wild's chamber of gold (221);

since the narrator has been so wrong, the implication is that he/she is wrong and that Joe was looking for Wild in Dorcas. A trace is also "a path or trail through a wilderness that has been beaten out by the passage of animals or people". Joe was a pupil of the Hunters Hunter, Henry LesTroy, so this definition might suggest Joe's love of and expertise in the wilderness. When one traces something, he is attempting "to locate or discover (a cause, for example) by searching or researching evidence." Much of Joe's life was spent searching emotionally for his mother. To trace is also "to make one's way; follow a path" and "to

have origins; be traceable" (American Heritage Dictionary). Joe makes his way as he changes himself eight times, perhaps always with the goal of being traceable so his elusive mother might find him.

Trace, Violet -- Joe's wife, Rose Dear's daughter, True Belle's granddaughter. Before Violet attempts to slash the face of her husband's dead lover, she is known to the neighbors as an unlicensed hairdresser who keeps birds. They also know her as the woman who "sat down in the middle of the street. She didn't stumble nor was she pushed: she just sat down" (17); she is also the woman who tried to steal a baby, but she is no shrinking violet. In discussing Violet's instability (cracks), the Narrator explains that "I call them cracks because that is what they were. Not openings or breaks, but dark fissures in the globe light of the day" (22). After Violet disrupts Dorcas' funeral, she is again the topic of conversation, but "in the process [the neighbors] had changed the woman's name. Violent they called her now" (75). A variation of the phrase "the woman they called Violent" is used four times in the scenes between Violent and Alice Manfred (77-83).

> As her name changes, Violet is transformed from proud to pathetic as she comes to terms with self-hate and abandoned dreams. She searches to understand what has brought her to this fateful point. What has turned her into someone she no longer knows or loves. (S.Davis 6C)

The violet is a flower "having spurred, irregular flowers that are characteristically purplish-blue but sometimes yellow or white" (The American Heritage Dictionary). The lack of conformity in the violet's petals and its variety of colors provide an appropriate name for the mercurial Violet Trace. Her often irrational behavior (sitting in the street, stealing a baby, trying to slash a corpse's face, releasing all her birds after the slashing incident) becomes more focused after the funeral. She talks to as many people as she can who knew Dorcas in an attempt to discover everything about the eighteen year old girl her husband loved and shot. Because of her actions, she had gone from Violet to Violent; however, that violence never erupts again. By the end of the novel, she has returned to Violet as she and Joe try to find their way back to the relationship they had when they first married. The violet is a delicate looking flower but a survivor. In this way, Violet resembles the flower whose name she bears. Trace is her married name.

Treason River -- in Virginia. As an adult, Joe makes a third attempt to find his mother, Wild. He was searching for the tree with the roots that grew backwards:

> Below that tree was the river whites called Treason where fish raced to the line, and swimming among them could be riotous or serene. But to get there you risked treachery by the very ground you walked on. The

> slopes and low hills that fell gently toward the river only appeared welcoming; underneath vines, carpet grass, wild grape, hibiscus and wood sorrel, the ground was as porous as a sieve. A step could swallow your foot or your whole self. (182)

Treason is a betrayal; Morrison's description of the river with its welcoming path that can swallow one whole, capsulates all the betrayals within the plot. It can also foreshadow the shift in the Narrator's role that is revealed in the closing. Since the Treason is associated with Joe's search for Wild, it may clearly name the betrayal he feels in not having a mother who will claim him (see Trace, Joe).

True Belle -- Rose Dear's mother, Violet's grandmother. As a young woman, True Belle is owned by Vera Louise Gray's family. When the unmarried, pregnant Vera Louise is forced to leave Vesper County, Virginia for Baltimore, she takes True Belle with her even though the slave woman must leave her own children, Rose Dear and May. In Baltimore she helps Vera Louise rear and spoil the golden baby they both take such delight in. After Vera Louise tells her son that his father is an African American, it is True Belle who tells him his father's name and location. True Belle returns to Vesper County in 1888 a free woman, a mother that has come to help her daughter Rose Dear who has lost everything and is incapable of taking care of herself and her five children. True Belle "left her cushiony job in Baltimore"

and "slowly but steadily, for about four years, . . . got things organized" (99). In that time,

> True Belle was there, chuckling, competent, stitching by firelight, gardening and harvesting by day. Pouring mustard tea on the girls' cuts and bruises, and keeping them at their tasks with spell binding tales of her Baltimore days and the child she had cared for there. (101-02)

Through her loyalty to Vera Louise (she knew of the pregnancy before Vera Louise's parents) and her willingness to restore order to her daughter's life, True Belle personifies her name. She is True in that she does her duty first to her master when she is a slave and then to her family when she is free. Belle is an English name, a "variant of Bella, reflecting the French feminine adjective belle beautiful" (Hanks and Hodges First). True Belle is beautiful, not physically, but in the spirit with which she helps those who need her, in her selflessness. She functions as the Ancestor/Good Mother so often found in Morrison's work, taking on the characteristics of Baby Suggs, Pilate, Eva, Therese.

Vesper County, Virginia -- where Joe and Violet meet. This fictional Southern county is mentioned frequently throughout the novel, providing a personal background for Joe and Violet that contrasts to their present lives in the City. Although Vesper connotes peaceful, sacred, the nineteenth century South was anything but that for the African

Americans Morrison depicts in this novel. Yet it is the place where she weaves together the realities of the times with her almost mythical characters: Hunters Hunter, Wild, Golden Gray, True Belle, Rose Dear. When the children and grandchildren of these characters reach the City, Morrison provides a clear sense of place by frequently providing street names and descriptions. When the focus is on the South, Morrison does the same as she places characters in and around Bear, Cumberland, Goshen, and Vienna, all actual locations in Virginia. Her characters are also associated with Palestine, Crossland, and Rome, connecting them to ancient places and ancient beliefs. Such locations allow for sharp contrast when Joe and Violent are seduced by Harlem.

Wild -- Joe's mother. Golden Gray first encounters her when he stops in the rain to fix the trunk on his phaeton. "In the trees to his left, he sees a naked berry-black woman. She is covered with mud and leaves are in her hair. Her eyes are large and terrible" (144). As she runs away, she hits her head against a tree and is knocked out. Reluctantly, Golden Gray takes the pregnant woman to the first shelter he finds; it is the home of the father he is seeking, and it is that father, Hunters Hunter, who names the woman. After her baby is born, he leans over to check on the mother, but

> when he turned his head to adjust the blanket over her, she raised up and sank her teeth in his cheek. He yanked away and touching his bruised face lightly, chuckled. 'Wild, eh?' (171)

Hunters Hunter, as his name indicates, knows that "some things are like that. There's no gain fathoming more" (166). Wild remains in that area but is never tamed though Golden Gray lives with her in a cave.

> [Joe] and Hunter and Victory had seen traces of her in those woods: ruined honeycombs, the bits and leaving of stolen victuals and many times the signal Hunter relied on most--redwings, those blue-black birds with the bolt of red on their wings. (176)

Joe Trace is the newborn she rejects in Hunter's cabin, and he never finds her, never hears her acknowledge her motherhood. Once he is almost sure that she is in a tree, and he implores her to

> 'Give me a sign, then. You don't have to say nothing. Let me see your hand. Just stick it out someplace and I'll go; I promise. A sign.' He begged, pleaded for her hand until the light grew even smaller 'You my mother?' (178)

There is no answer. Wild's name, suggesting that she is a product of nature, is reflected in her nakedness, the primordial-like mud that covers her, and her association with the redwings and the Treason River (see Treason River). However, Wild, unlike the majority of forest animals, especially mothers, abandons Joe once he is born. In her actions, Wild epitomizes her name--animal-like, she is

uncivilized, living by her own rules, and in this she is rare in Morrison, a mother who in no way acknowledges her child. Although she lives her life on her own terms, a quality most would find admirable, Wild's abandonment of Joe tempers this admiration because Joe never understands that it is not that his mother *does* not acknowledge him but that she *cannot* because she is Wild. When Hunter first sees her, he asks Golden Gray, "'Where you pick up a wild woman?'", and he answers, "'In the woods where wild women grow'" (171). Both men understand what the child never does. For all that he taught Joe, Hunter never told him that "some things are like that. There's no gain fathoming more" (166). However, Wild's lack of acknowledgement, regardless of its motivations, has its consequences and Joe is affected. As a young man, unable to connect with his mother, Joe attempts to dismiss Wild as worthless;

> the small children believed she was a witch, but they were wrong. This creature hadn't the intelligence to be a witch. She was powerless, invisible, wastefully daft. Everywhere and nowhere. (179)

Because Joe never understands that his mother lives by instinct rather than by learned behavior, he never realizes the full ramification of her name. And for that he suffers; he unconsciously searches for his mother in his sexual relationships and eventually kills the thing he loves, perhaps subconsciously killing his mother. As soon as he

denies Wild, "from then on his work was maniacal. . . . After Palestine, when the cotton was in, baled and spoken for, Joe got married and worked even harder" (179-80). Even though decades pass, two paragraphs later, "he sets out, armed, to find Dorcas" (180), the wild young woman who tolerates him as she awakens sexually. Within the space of two pages, Morrison juxtaposes Wild, Violet, and Dorcas, with Joe as the common denominator, thereby suggesting a connection between Joe's accidental killing of Dorcas and his mother's abandonment. Although he felt that Wild was "powerless," Joe was wrong. He never understood the power of names.

Williams, Victory -- son of Rhoda and Frank Williams who reared Joe when Wild abandoned him. Joe and Victory are as close as brothers even though the Williams are no blood kin to Joe. The two boys go to school together, learn to hunt from Henry LesTroy--Hunters Hunter, and work together until Joe marries Violet and they leave for the City. When Joe is in his relationship with Dorcas, he longs to have a friend to confide in as close as Victory had been. But Victory is in prison and the two childhood friends never meet again. As a character, Victory is usually mentioned only in relation to the positive events in Joe's past or in Joe's longing for the past friendship. Though his name seems irrelevant except as an ironic name for an imprisoned man,

Victory may serve as an example of the naming practice of blindly pointing to a word in the Bible. On the other hand, it is probably not a contrived name since in Black Names in America it is listed as an unusual Black male name (491) and as a Black slave female name (91).

CONCLUSION

By Toni Morrison's third novel, Song of Solomon, even the most casual reader realizes the importance of naming in her work. In The Bluest Eye and Sula such names as Pecola, Sula, Soaphead Church, China, Poland, M'Dear, Aunt Jimmy and Blue Jack have caught our attention and our imagination. In Song of Solomon, Morrison foreshadows her close attention to naming in that novel with the epithet, "The fathers may soar/And the children may know their names." On the novel's first page, she describes in detail the renaming of Main Street by the Southside citizens to Not Doctor Street. Throughout the novel, the word name is used repeatedly; within the novel Morrison creates some of her most memorable names: Pilate, Milkman, First Corinthians, Railroad Tommy, Sweet, Shalimar, Sing, Macon Dead, Macon Dead, Jr., and Macon Dead III. By the final scene, a bird soars away with the earring which contains Pilate's name.

In the three novels that follow Song of Solomon, Morrison's use of thought provoking names does not decrease. However, she no longer draws attention to naming as blatantly as she had in Song of Solomon, the novel that explains, at least in part, her philosophy of naming, that "when you know your name, you should hang on to it, for unless it is noted down and remembered, it will die when you do". As Milkman leaves Virginia, having discovered his

name, he thinks of the people he knows and "their names. Names they got from yearnings, gestures, flaws, events, mistakes, weaknesses. Names that bore witness" (333).

In these statements, Morrison creates an intrinsic connection between the name and its bearer, a connection she rarely takes lightly. Her patterns of naming force readers to deal with a name and, in turn, with its relationship to its bearer; she forces readers to decide, consciously or unconsciously, whether a name bears witness to the character of its bearer.

Morrison's names often connect the bearers to their communities, large and small, which watch, judge and rename. Teapot's Mama, Violent, Thirty Mile Woman, Hunters Hunter, Wild and No Mercy Hospital all reflect community judgement.

Not only does the community name, it often bears a name that not only identifies a location on the map but also reflects Morrison's ironic take on white/black relationships. The Bottom is a "nigger joke," and New River Road (Sula) is the white man's promise that never materializes; Vesper County (Jazz) and Eloe (Tar Baby) suggest sanctuaries for the African American, but the protagonists must eventually leave each of these communities, directly or indirectly, because of a confrontation with the dominant white culture.

Even within communities, Morrison names places deliberately, to create a sense of belonging and pride (Edna

Finch's Mellow House, Reba's Grill), a sense of irony (Dreamland Theatre, Honore, Sweet Home) and/or a sense of family heritage (Ryna's Gulch, Solomon's Leap).

Her deliberateness in naming adds such texture, such an intrinsic layer of meaning to Morrison's novels, that to change many of the names would alter the impact of the text dramatically. Macon Dead, Jr.'s name reflects not only the inadvertent but damaging renaming of his father by a drunken soldier but also the state of his emotional life; it contains a legacy that his son can only break with the discovery of the family's real name. Pilate functions as the pilot for that son's discovery. Sula's African name bears her fate within it; she betrays and is betrayed. Stamp Paid has renamed himself to reflect the debt that he feels is paid when his white master seduces his wife.

However, the texture which Morrison's naming provides is not always easily discernible. Some allusions are obviously biblical or mythological: Eva, Scripture, Circe, Ajax. Others are explained in the novel (Tar Baby, Baby Suggs, holy, Denver). However, to fully understand and appreciate many of the names, a reader must turn to research. Only then does Morrison's art of naming become apparent. This technique engages the serious reader and reflects the relationship between naming and characterization in Morrison. Her characters are often

complex human beings and more often than not, their names reflect this complexity.

Names reflect not only characterization but also the theme of identity which dominates Morrison's six novels; characters lack it, search for it, lose it, and deny it, and their names mirror this connection. In Morrison's first novel (The Bluest Eye), Pecola lacks a sense of cultural and personal identity because, having been told so often that she is ugly, she so yearns for the blue eyes of the white culture that she prays for them, believes she has them and eventually goes mad. Her name ("to break edge of vessel, to chip out, notch, strike off") bears witness to the fragmentation of her young life. The protagonist in Morrison's second novel, Sula, is an independent young woman who rejects the conventional life of the other women in the Bottom. Instead, Sula has a sense of her own identity and declares, "'I don't want to make somebody else. I want to make myself'" (92). Her name means blighted and betrayal, and with her birthmark and the affair with her best friend's husband, in the eyes of the community, her public identity lies in her name. However, because she alone of the women has a sense of who she is, the one person she never betrays is herself. Although, in Song of Solomon, Milkman (Macon Dead III) is a thirty-year old man, he walks in his father's shadow and has no clear sense of who he is. Only when he discovers his true family name does he discover his personal

and cultural identity. On the other hand, Jadine Childs, in Morrison's fourth novel Tar Baby, denies her African Americanness by taking a European lover, attending the Sorbonne, and emulating the life of her white patrons. Her nickname, Jade, ("term of reprobation applied to a woman"; "dulled or sated by continual use or indulgence") contains Morrison's indictment of Jade's denial of her cultural identity. In Beloved Paul D Garner's slave name reveals his lack of identity. He is Paul D to differentiate him from his two slave brothers, Paul A and Paul F; Garner is the surname of his owner. With his name, Morrison emphasizes the fact that white owners rarely considered their slaves as individuals. When he is taken away in chains, Paul D envies Mister, the rooster that carries a name which he can never have. Yet by the end of the novel, Paul D has grown emotionally and is ready to accept the renaming when Denver calls him Mr. D. With the new name, he has a new identity and a new chance at life. In Morrison's sixth novel, Jazz, Violet temporarily loses her identity after she tries to maim the corpse of her husband's lover at the funeral. "By then the usher boys were joined by frowning men, who carried *that* kicking, growling Violet out while she [Violet] looked on in amazement" (92). Here Violet feels fragmented and even more so when the neighbors refer to her as Violent, a name that reflects her loss of identity. However, by the end of the novel, the Violent is dropped as Violet and her

husband begin to rebuild their lives; she regains her identity and her name.

In addition, in each of her novels, Toni Morrison, directly or indirectly, connects the name of at least one character to Africa. In this way, she restores their identity to African Americans and returns them--through the simple but profound action of naming--to their Motherland. Such names function as the answer to the numerous distortions from the Bible and myth. It seems strange that a writer whose African Americanness permeates every facet of her fiction should use so few African names. Yet, for this reason, they demand attention; like gems, they gain their value from their rareness. Her African names stand as reminders that although the lives of African Americans from 1619 to the present have been intertwined with a dominant culture and its naming patterns, that the tie to Africa cannot be broken. Instead, heritage can reside in a name.

In Toni Morrison's fictive worlds, few characters are isolated from their community, from their village. Instead, the majority are connected to their past and/or present through their names, names that have the power to destroy and to provide hope. Milkman realizes that "when you know your name, you should hang on to it, for unless it is noted down and remembered, it will die when you do." Through her art of naming and of storytelling, Morrison has created characters and names that will not die.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

America and Its People. 2nd ed. Eds. James Kirby Martin, et al.. NY: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1993. 478-79.

American Heritage Dictionary. 1985 ed.

Andrews, Terry L. "Jazz." Rev. of Jazz, by Toni Morrison. Magill's Literary Annual 1992: Essays-Reviews of 200 Outstanding Books Published in the United States during 1992. Ed. Frank N. Magill. Pasadena: Salem Press, 1993.

Atwood, Margaret. "Haunted by Their Nightmares." Bloom 143-148.

Awkward, Michael. "'Unruly and Let Loose': Myth, Ideology, and Gender in Song of Solomon." Callaloo 13.3 (Summer 1990): 482-498.

Ayittey, George B.N. Indigenous African Institutions. New York: Transnational Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Barker, Howard T. "The Family Names of American Negroes." American Speech XIV.3 (Oct. 1939) : 163 - 174.

Blassingame, John W.. The Slave Community: Plantation Life In The Antebellum South. NY: Oxford UP, 1972. 61-62.

Bloom, Harold, ed. Modern Critical Views: Toni Morrison. New York: Chelsea House, 1990.

"Boden." Scots Dictionary . 1965 ed.

Brenner, Gerry. "Song of Solomon: Rejecting Rank's Monomyth and Feminism." McKay 114-125.

Braxton, Joanne M., and Andree Nicola McLaughlin. Wild Women in the Whirlwind: Afra-American Culture and the Contemporary Literary Renaissance. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers UP, 1990.

Brooks, Tim, and Earle Marsh. The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows: 1946-Present. 4th ed. NY: Ballantine Books, 1988.

"Buck." The Century Dictionary: An Encyclopedic Lexicon of the English Language. 1889 ed.

Byerman, Keith E. "Beyond Realism: The Fictions of Toni Morrison." Bloom 55-84.

Chuks-orji, Ogonne. Names from Africa: Their Origin, Meaning and Pronunciation. Ed. Keith E. Baird. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., 1972.

Davis, Angela Y. "Black Women and Music: A Historical Legacy of Struggle." Braxton and McLaughlin: 3-21.

Davis, Cynthia A. "Self, Society, and Myth in Toni Morrison's Fiction." Contemporary Literature 23.3 (Summer 1982): 323-42.

Davis, Sandra. "Jazz." Rev. of Jazz, by Toni Morrison. Charlotte Observer 26 Apr 1992 : 6C.

DeWeever, Jacqueline. "Toni Morrison's Use of Fairy Tale,

Folk Tale and Myth in Song of Solomon." Southern Folklore Quarterly 44 (1980) : 131-144.

Dixon, Melvin. "Like an Eagle in the Air: Toni Morrison." Bloom 115-42.

Evans, Mari, ed. Black Women Writers (1950-1980): A Critical Evaluation. Garden City: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1984.

Fabre, Genevieve. "Genealogical Archaeology on the Quest for Legacy in Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon." Mckay: 104-114.

Fishman, Charles. "Naming Names: Three Recent Novels by Women Writers." Names: Journal of the American Name Society 32.1 (1984): 33-43.

"Foucalt." Harrap's New Standard French and English Dictionary. 1972 ed.

Franklin, John Hope, and Alfred A. Moss, Jr. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans. 6th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988.

Gabbin, Joanne. " A Laying On of Hands: Black Women Writers Exploring the Roots of their Folk and Cultural Tradition." Braxton and McLaughlin: 246-263.

Hamilton, Edith. Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes. New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1969.

Hanks, Patrick, and Flavin Hodges. Dictionary of First Names. Oxford: UP, 1990.

---. Dictionary of Surnames. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.

Harper's Bible Dictionary. 1985 ed.

Harris, Trudier. Fiction and Folklore: The Novels of Toni Morrison. Knoxville: U Tennessee Press, 1991.

---. "Reconnecting Fragments: Afro-American Folk Tradition in The Bluest Eye. McKay: 68-76.

Holloway, Joseph E., and Winifred K. Vass The African Heritage of American English. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993.

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia: Identifying and Explaining All Proper Names and Significant Terms and Subjects In the Holy Scriptures, Including the APOCPYPHA. 1962 ed.

Jones, Gayl. "Motives of Folktale: Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon." Liberating Voices: Oral Tradition in African-American Literature. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991.

Josephy, Alvin M., Jr.. The Indian Heritage of America. NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1969.

Jung, Carl G., et al. Man and His Symbols. Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1964. 81.

Lang, Andrew. Magic and Realism. NY: Greenwood Press, 1969.

Leclair, Thomas. "'The Language Must Not Sweat': A Conversation With Toni Morrison." Gates and Appiah: 369-377.

Lee, Dorothy H. "The Quest for Self: Triumph and Failure in the Works of Toni Morrison." Evans: 346-59.

Lepow, Lauren. "Paradise Lost and Found: Dualism and Edenic Myth in Toni Morrison's Tar Baby." Contemporary Literature 28.3 (Fall 1987): 363-77.

Lewis, Vashti Crutcher. "African Tradition in Toni Morrison's Sula." Braxton and McLaughlin: 316-25.

MacKethan, Lucinda H. "Names to Bear Witness: The Theme and Tradition of Naming in Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon." CEA Critic 49.2-4 (1986-87): 199-207.

Magness, Patricia. "The Knight and the Princess: The Structure of Courtly Love in Toni Morrison's Tar Baby." South Atlantic Review 54.4 (1989):85-100.

Mason, Theodore, Jr. "The Novelist as Conservator: Stories and Comprehension in Song of Solomon." Bloom: 171-200.

McKay, Nellie. "An Interview with Toni Morrison." Toni Morrison: Critical Perspectives Past and Present. Eds. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and K.A. Appiah. New York: Amistad, 1993. 396-411.

---. Critical Essays on Toni Morrison. Boston: G.K. Hall and Sons, 1988.

Mencken, H.L. The American Language: AN INQUIRY INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH IN THE UNITED STATES. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978.

Mitchell, Carolyn A. " 'I Love To Tell The Story': Biblical revisions in Beloved." Religion and Literature 23.3 (Autumn 1991): 27-41.

Mobley, Marilyn Sanders. Folk Roots and Mythic Wings in Sarah Orne Jewett and Toni Morrison: The Cultural Function of Narrative. Baton Rogue: Louisiana State UP, 1991.

Morrison, Toni. Beloved. New York: Penguin Books, 1987.

---. The Bluest Eye. The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women. Eds. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar. New York: W.W. Norton, 1985. 2068-2184.

---. Jazz. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.

---. Song of Solomon. New York: Penguin Books, 1977.

---. Sula. New York: New American Library, 1973.

---. Tar Baby. New York: Penguin Books, 1981.

---. "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation." Evans: 339-45.

The New Cassell's French Dictionary: French-English, English-French. 1962 ed.

Oxford English Dictionary. 1989 ed.

Paquet, Sandra Pouchet. "The Ancestor As Foundation In Their Eyes Were Watching God and Tar Baby." Callaloo 13.3 (1990): 499-515.

Puckett, Newbell Niles. Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina P, 1926. 23.

---. Black Names in America: Origins and Usage. Ed. Murray Heller. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1975.

"The Ras Shamra Texts." Larousse World Mythology. Ed. Pierre Grimal. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965.

"Reich." Wildhagen English-German Dictionary. 1963 ed.

Rigney, Barbara Hill. The Voices of Toni Morrison. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1991.

Rosenberg, Donna. World Mythology: An Anthology of the Great Myths and Epics. Lincolnwood, Ill.: Passport Books, 1990. 168-77.

Rosenberg, Ruth. "'And the Children May Know Their Names': Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon." Names in Literature: Essays from Literary Onomastic Studies. Eds. Grace Alvarez-Altman and Frederick M. Burelback. Lanhan: University Press of America, 1987. 215-25.

Samuels, Wilfred D, and Clenora Hudson-Weems. Toni Morrison: Twayne's United States Authors Series. Ed. Warren French. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990.

"Shalem." Everyman's Dictionary of Non-Classical Mythology. 1965 ed.

Smith, Elsdon C. New Dictionary of American Family Names. 1973 ed.

Stein, Karen F. " 'I Didn't Even Know His Name': Name and Naming-Toni Morrison's Sula." Names: Journal of the American Name Society 28.3 (1980): 226-29.

Stepto, Robert. " 'Intimate Things in Place': A

Conservation With Toni Morrison." Gates and Appiah: 378-95.

Stewart, George R. American Given Names: Their Origin and History in the Context of the English Language. 1979 ed.

"Sukey." A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English. 1970 ed.

Tate, Claudia,ed. Black Women Writers at Work. New York: Continuum,1983. 118-31.

Warner, Anne Bradford. "New Myths and Ancient Properties: The Fiction of Toni Morrison." The Hollins Critic 25.3 (1988): 2-11.

Wilentz, Gay. "Toni Morrison, Song of Solomon." Binding Cultures: Black Women Writers in Africa and the Diaspora. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992. 79-98.

Withycomb, E.G. The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

APPENDIX A. HISTORICAL NAMES

Adam

Armour, Mr.

Beatrice

Blass, Billy

Bojangles

Booker T.

Caron

Catherine the Great

Charlemagne

Cheech and Chong

Chloe

Chopin

Cleopatra

Colbert, Claudett

Dante

DeGobineau

Desdemona

Dillinger

Dostoyevsky

Eurydice

Eve

Father Divine

Fontaine, Joan

Ford, Henry

Gable, Clark

Garbo, Greta

General Lee

George III

Gibbon

God

Grable, Betty

Grant, U.S.

Hamlet

Harlow, Jean

Haydn

Hitler

Hoover

Iago

Ink Spots, the

Jackson, Andrew

Jesus

Kennedy

King of Spain

Lamarr, Hedy

Larousse

Lindbergh

Liszt

Little Red Riding Hood

MacDonald, Jeanette

Mary Magdalene

Mies vander Rohe

Morse, Sam

Neanderthals

O'Hara, Scarlet

Oglethrope

Ophelia

Othello

Picasso

President Lincoln

Ritter, Tex

Rogers, Ginger

Roosevelt, Mr.

Roosevelt, Eleanor

Saint-Exupery

Schweitzer, Albert

Scot, Dred

Shearer, Norma

Slim Bates' Ebony Keys

Smith, Bessie

Sojourner

Stepin Fetchit

Swift, Mr.

Tarzan

Temple, Shirley

Thoreau

Three Stooges

Tiny Tim

Todd, Mary

Uncle Sam

Uncle Tom

UNIA

Venus

Virgin Mary

Vulcan

Ward, Montgomery

West, Mae

Withers, Jane

APPENDIX B. OTHER NAMES

Abu Snake Charmer

Adolphe

Aisha

Alicia

Allen, Bishop

Angelina, Luke

Appolonaire, Marie

Arabian Nights Dancer

Aunt Phyllis

Aunt Rosa

Barron, Joan

Beatrice

Becky

Bede, Clayton

Bernadine

Betty

Big Mama

Big Papa

Billy

Bob

Brandywine

Breakstone, Calvin

Bridges, B. J.

Broughtons, the

Brown, Sally

Djorvak, Anna

Doreen

Downing, May (Mama May)

Dr. Michelin

Drake

Duggie

Dumfrey women

Dunn

Ella

Ellen

Ernie Paul

Estella

Faye

Felicite

Fields, Willy

Finley, Mr.

Francine

Frank G

Frank

Freddie

Freeman, Paul

Gaines, Mrs.

Garner, Paul A

Garner, Paul F

Gay Northeasters

George

Giant

Graham, Michael-Mary

Gray, Col. Wordsworth

Hatchers

Hattie

Heatter, Gabriel

Herrod Brothers

Hodges, Mr.

Horace

Hot Stream

Ivy

Jackson, Mrs.

Jake

Joanna

Joe Nathan

John

John L.

Johnson, Miss

Jones, Miss Della

Judd, Winnie Ruth

Judy

Keane, Pvt.

Laura

Lilah

Lilly

Long, Grace

Lordi, Joseph

Lordi, Leonora

Mallory, Mr.

Marcelline

Martin, Henri

Martin

Mary

May

Mexican, the

Mickelena

Midget

Miller, Frances

Minnie

Miss Tyler

Moore, Helen

Nathan

National Negro Business League

Nephew

Nick

Nicolson, Mrs.

Nuzio

O.V.

Omar

One Ton Lady

Oom

P-Komet

Patsy

Paul

Pax

Peace, Eva (Pearl)

Phil

Philly

Pike, Rev. Willie

Popeye

Porky

Ransom, Miss

Rascal

Rastus

Rayford, Mrs.

Red Cora

Reed, Mrs.

Rekus

Ricks, Harlon

Rochelle

Rossiter, Sgt.

Rudy

Sabat, Cecile

Salem Women's Club

Samson

San Francisco

Sandy Claus

Saul

APPENDIX C. OTHER PLACE NAMES

131st Street

133

134th Street

135th Street

237 Clifton Place

254

40th Street

42 Street

72nd Street

Aiken

Akron

Alabama

Alabama, Brewton

Altoona

Apollo, The

Argentina

Arkansas

Arkansas River

Atlanta

Atlantic

Bahama Islands

Baltimore

Barbado

Baton Rouge

Bear

Bellevue

Blue Ridge Mountains

Boston

Broadway

Brooklyn

Bryn Mawr

Bubba

Bunny's

Canada

Caribbean Sea

Carolina

Catholic Foundling Hospital

Chester Street

Chicago

Cincinnati

Cleveland

Colorado, Boulder

Columbus Avenue

Coney Island

Convent

Cottown

Crossland

Cumberland

Dallas

Dartmouth

Deauville

Deer Creek

Delaware

Delaware, Wilmington

Dick's Fresh Food and Sundries

Dominique

Dresden

Dubberry Point

East River

East St. Louis

Eden

Edgecomb Avenue

Edison

Edna Finch's Mellow House

Eighth

Elmira Theatre

Elyria

Erie Lackawanna

Europe

Fairfield Cemetery

Fairfield Heights

Felton's

Ferrie

Fifteenth Street

Fisk

Florida

Gainesville

Galveston

Garden Avenue

Garfield Primary

Georgia

Great Saint Matthews

Great Lakes

Greater Antilles

Gulf of Mexico

Hawaii

High Fashion

Honore

Houston

Howard

Hunters Cave

Illinois

Indiana, Greensburg

Indiana, Springfield

Irene's Palace of Cosmetology

Isaley's

JHS-139

Kentucky

Kentucky, Pulaski County

Lafayette

Lake Shore Park

Lake Erie

Montour Ridge

Montour County

Morgan Street

Morningside Park

Mulberry St.

Nagadoches

New Jersey

New York Public Library

New River Road

New York

Newport News

North Carolina

Ohio

Ohio, Lorain

Oklahoma

Old Queen

Orange County

Oregon

Panama Canal

Paris

Park Avenue

Paydirt

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania, Danville

Pensecol

Philadelphia

Pittsburgh

Place de Vent

Plank Road

Poncie

Porter's Landing

PS-89

Quebec

Queen of France

Reba's Grill

Richmond Street

Rocky Mount

Roseland

Rue Madelaine

Salem Baptist

Salt Lake

San Diego

Savannah

Sawyer's Restaurant

Sea Islands

Selma

Seventh Avenue

Shiloh

Sixteenth Street

Solomon's General Store

Sonny's Shop

Sook's

South America

South Suzanne

South Carolina

Southside

Springfield, Ohio

St. Nicholas Avenue

St. Louis

St. Lawrence

St. Nicholas

Stone Lane

Sundown House

Sunnydale

Sutterfield

Syracuse

Tallahassee

Talledega

Thirteenth Street

Thirty-fifth Street

Tiffany's

Time and a Half Pool Hall

Tongaloo

Tuileries, The

Twenty-first Street

Twenty-second Street

Tyrell

U.C. Berkley

Vienna

Virginia

Virginia, Culpepper

Virginia, Shalimar

Wadleigh

Washington Irving School

West Fifty-third

Western Row

Windward Islands

Wordsworth

Wyndham Road

Wyoming, Powder River

Wyoming, Bitter Creek

YMCA